THE COLLECTED WORKS of *Nikolay Gogol*

translated by

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DEAD SOULS

by

Nikolay Gogol

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BOOK ONE

CHAPTERS X AND XI

CHAPTER X

WHEN they met at the house of the police-master, already known to the reader as the father and benefactor of the town, the officials had the opportunity of observing of each other that they had actually grown thin through all these worries and anxieties. And, indeed, the appointment of a new governor-general, and the two documents of so serious a character, and these extraordinary rumours, had, all taken together, left a perceptible imprint on their faces, and the dress-coats of some of them had become noticeably looser. Everything was changed for the worse: the president was thinner, and the inspector of the medical board was thinner, and the prosecutor was thinner, and one Semyon Ivanovitch, who was never called by his surname, and wore on his first finger a ring which he used to show to ladies—even he was thinner. Of course there were some bold spirits, as there always are, who did not lose their presence of mind; but they were not many; in fact the postmaster was the only one. He alone was unchanged in his invariable composure, and always when such things happened was in the habit of saying: "We know all about you governor-generals! You may be changed three or four times over, but I have been for thirty years in the same place, my good sir." To this the other officials usually answered: "It's all very well for you, Sprechen Sie Deutsch, Ivan Andreitch: the

post office is your job—receiving and dispatching the mails; the worst you can do is to close the post office an hour too early if you are in a bad temper, or to accept a late letter from some merchant at the wrong hour, or to send off some parcel which ought not to be sent off—any one would be a saint, of course, in your place. But suppose you had the devil at your elbow every day, so that even what you don't want to take he thrusts upon you. You have not much to fear, to be sure; you have only one son; while God has been so bountiful to Praskovya Fyodorovna, my boy, that not a year passes but she presents me with a little Praskovya or a little Petrushka; in our place, you'd sing a different tune, my boy." So said the officials, but whether it is really possible to resist the devil it is not for the author to decide. In the council assembled on this occasion, there was a conspicuous absence of that essential thing which among the common people is called good sense. We seem somehow not made for representative institutions. In all our assemblies, from the meetings of the peasants up to all kinds of learned and other committees, there is a pretty thorough muddle, unless there is some one at the head who is managing it all. It is hard to say why it is. Apparently the nature of the Russian people is such, that the only successful committees are those formed to arrange entertainments, or dinners, such as clubs, or pleasure gardens in the German style. Yet we are always ready at any minute for anything. We fly like the wind to get up benevolent and philanthropic societies and goodness knows what. The aim may be excellent but nothing ever comes of it. Perhaps it is because we are satisfied at the very beginning and consider everything has already been done. For instance,

after organising a society for the benefit of the poor, and subscribing a considerable sum, we immediately spend half of the fund subscribed on giving a dinner to all the worthies of the town in celebration of our laudable enterprise; with what is left of our funds we promptly take a grand house with heating arrangements and porters for the use of the committee; after which five roubles and a half is all that is left for the poor, and over the distribution of that sum, the members of the committee cannot agree, each one urging the claims of some crony of his own. The committee that met on this occasion was of quite another kind: it was formed through urgent necessity. It was not a question of the poor or of outsiders at all: it concerned every official personally: the occasion was a calamity which threatened all alike, and so the meeting should have been more unanimous and more united. But for all that the result was awfully queer. To say nothing of the differences of opinion that crop up at every meeting, an inexplicable indecisiveness was apparent in the views of all present; one said that Tchitchikov was a forger of government notes, and then added, "Though perhaps he isn't a forger"; another declared that he was an official in the governor-general's office, and at once went on, "Though the devil only knows, it is not branded on his forehead." All were opposed to the suggestion that he was a brigand in disguise. They considered that besides his appearance, which was highly respectable, there was nothing in his conversation to suggest a man given to deeds of violence. All at once the postmaster, who had been standing for some minutes lost in meditation, cried out suddenly from some inspiration or from something else: "Do you know who he is, my friends?" There was some-

thing so striking in the voice in which he uttered this, that it made them all cry out with one voice: "Who?" "He is no other than Captain Kopeykin, gentlemen!" And when they all instantly asked with one voice, "Who is Captain Kopeykin?" the postmaster said: "Why, don't you know who Captain Kopeykin is?"

They all answered that they did not know who Captain Kopeykin was.

"Captain Kopeykin," said the postmaster, opening his snuffbox only a little way for fear that some of his neighbours should take a pinch with fingers in whose cleanliness he had no confidence—he was, indeed, in the habit of saying, "We know, my good sir, there is no telling where your fingers have been, and snuff's a thing that must be kept clean,"—"Captain Kopeykin," he repeated as he took a pinch: "why you know if I were to tell you, it would make a regular romance after a fashion, very interesting to any author."

Every one present expressed a desire to hear this story, or as the postmaster expressed it, a regular romance after a fashion, very interesting to any author, and he began as follows:

"After the campaign of 1812, my good sir"—so the postmaster began his story, regardless of the fact that not one but six gentlemen were sitting in the room—"after the campaign of 1812, Captain Kopeykin was sent back with the wounded. A hot-headed fellow, as whimsical as the devil, he had been punished in various ways and been under arrest—there was nothing he had not had a taste of. Whether it was at Krasnoe or at Leipzig I can't say but, can you fancy, he had an arm and a leg blown off. Well, at that time, no arrangements had been made, you know, about the

wounded; that—what do you call it?—pension fund for the wounded was only set going, can you fancy, long afterwards. Captain Kopeykin saw that he would have to work, but he only had one arm, you understand, the left. He went home to his father's. His father said, 'I can't keep you, I can scarcely,' only fancy, 'get a crust of bread for myself.' So my Captain Kopeykin made up his mind to go to Petersburg, my good sir, to see whether he could get help from the authorities, to put it to them, in a manner of speaking, that he had sacrificed his life and shed his blood. . . . Well, in one way or another, on a train of wagons, you know, or on the government vans, he got at last to Petersburg, my good sir. Well, can you fancy, here what do you call him, I mean, Captain Kopeykin, found himself in the capital, the like of which, in a manner of speaking, there is not in the world! All at once a world, in a manner of speaking, lies before him, a certain plane of life, a fairy tale of Scheherazade, you understand. All at once, can you fancy, the Nevsky Prospect or Gorohovaya, dash it all, or Liteiny; there is a spire of some sort in the air; the bridges hang there like the devil, only fancy, without any support, that is, in short, a Semiramis, sir, and that's the only word for it! He made some attempts to get lodgings, only it was all terribly dear: curtains, blinds, all sorts of devilry, you understand, carpets—Persia, sir, in short . . . in a manner of speaking, you trample fortunes under foot. You walk along the street and your very nose can sniff the thousands: and all my Captain Kopeykin's banking account consisted of some fifty roubles and some silver. . . . Well, you can't buy an estate with that, you know, you might buy one perhaps, if you added forty

thousand to it, but you would have to borrow the forty thousand from the King of France; well, he found a refuge in a tavern for a rouble a day; dinner—cabbage soup, a piece of beef-steak . . . he sees it won't do to stay there long. He makes inquiries where he is to apply? 'Where are you to apply?' they say, 'the higher authorities are not in Petersburg yet.' They were all in Paris, you understand, the troops had not come back yet. 'But there is a temporary committee,' they tell him. 'You had better try there, maybe they can do something.' 'I'll go to the committee,' says Kopeykin. 'I'll say that I have, in a manner of speaking, shed my blood, that in a sense I have sacrificed my life.' So, sir, getting up early he combed his beard with his left hand, for to pay a barber would be in a certain sense to run up a bill, he pulled on his shabby uniform and stumped off, only fancy, on his wooden leg to the chief of the committee. He inquired where the chief lives. 'Over yonder,' they tell him, 'a house on the embankment': a poor hovel, you understand, glass panes in the windows, only fancy, mirrors ten feet across, marbles, footmen, my good sir, in fact, enough to turn you giddy. A metal handle on the door—a luxury of the highest class so that one would have to run to the shop, you know, and buy a ha'porth of soap and scrub away at one's hands for a couple of hours in a manner of speaking, and then perhaps one might venture to take hold of the handle. A porter at the door, you understand, with a stick in his hand, a face like a count's, a cambric collar, like some fat, over-fed pug dog. . . . My Kopeykin dragged himself somehow on his wooden leg to the reception room, squeezed himself into a corner for fear he might jerk his elbow

against some American or Indian, only fancy, gilt china vase of some sort. Well, I need hardly say he had to wait till he had had enough, for he arrived at the hour when the chief was, in a manner of speaking, just getting out of bed, and his valet had just brought him a silver basin for washing and all that, don't you know. My Kopeykin waits for four hours, and then the clerk on duty comes in and says: 'The director will be here directly.' And the room was full up by then with epaulettes and shoulder knots, as many people as beans on a plate. At last, my good sir, the director comes in. Well . . . can you imagine . . . the director! In his face, so to say . . . well in keeping, you understand, . . . with his position and his rank . . . such an expression, you know. He had a tip-top manner in every way; he goes up first to one and then to another: 'What have you come about? What do you want? What is your business?' At last, my good sir, he goes up to Kopeykin. Kopeykin says one thing and another. 'I have shed my blood, I have lost my arms and legs, I can't work—I make bold to ask, will there not be some assistance, some sort of an arrangement in regard to compensation, so to speak, a pension or something, you understand. The director sees that the man has got a wooden leg and that his right sleeve is empty and pinned to his uniform. 'Very good,' he says, 'come again in a day or two.' My Kopeykin is highly delighted. 'Come,' he thinks, 'the matter's settled.' He hops along the pavement in such spirits as you can fancy, goes into the Palkinsky restaurant, drinks a glass of vodka, dines, my good sir, at the London restaurant, orders cutlets, with caper sauce, a chicken with all sorts of trimmings, asks for a bottle

of wine, and in the evening goes to the theatre—in fact he has a jolly good time, so to say. In the street he sees a graceful English girl, floating along like a swan, only fancy. My Kopeykin—his blood was a little heated, you understand—was just about to run after her on his wooden leg, tap, tap along the pavement. 'But no,' he thought, 'to the devil with dangling after ladies for the time being! Better later on, when I get my pension. I have let myself go a little too much as it is.' And meanwhile he had spent almost half his money in one day, I beg you to observe. Three or four days later he goes to the committee to see the director. 'I have come,' he said, 'to hear what you have for me, owing to the illnesses and wounds I have sustained . . . I have in a sense shed my blood . . .' and that sort of thing, you understand, in the language suitable. 'Well,' said the director, 'I must tell you first of all that we can do nothing in your case without instructions from the higher command. You see yourself the position. Military operations are, in a manner of speaking, not completely over yet. You must wait till the minister arrives, you must have patience. Then you may be sure you won't be overlooked. And if you have nothing to live upon, here,' he said, 'here is something to help you. . . .' And what he gave him, you understand, was not very much, though with prudence it might have lasted till further instructions came. But that was not what my Kopeykin wanted. He had been reckoning on their paying him a thousand roubles down or something of the sort, with 'There you are, my dear boy, drink and make merry,' and instead of that, 'You can wait,' and no date fixed either. And already, you know, he had visions of the English girl and little suppers and cut-

lets. So he went down the steps as glum as an owl, looking like a poodle that has been drenched with water, with its ears drooping and its tail between its legs. Life in Petersburg had already got a hold on him, he had had some taste of it already. And now there was no knowing how he was to live, and he had no hope of any luxuries, you understand. And you know he was full of life and health and he had the appetite of a wolf. He passes some restaurant; and the cook there, only fancy, a Frenchman of some sort with an open countenance, with a linen shirt, an apron as white, in a manner of speaking, as snow, is making fines-herbes or cutlets with truffles, in fact all sorts of such delicacies that it would give one appetite enough to eat oneself. He passes Milyutinsky's shop, there is a salmon looking out of window, in a manner of speaking, cherries at five roubles the measure. A huge watermelon as big as an omnibus peeps out of window and seems to be looking for some one fool enough to pay a hundred roubles for it—in short, there is temptation at every step, his mouth watering, so to speak, and he must wait. So imagine his position: here on one side, so to say, there is salmon and watermelon, while on the other side they present him with the bitter dish called 'to-morrow.' 'Well,' he thinks, 'they can do as they like, but I will go,' he says, 'and rouse all the committee, every one in authority. I shall say, "do as you like." And he certainly was a peristent, impudent fellow, no sense in his head, you understand, but plenty of bounce. He goes to the committee: 'Well, what is it?' they say. 'Why are you back again? You have been told already.' 'I can't scrape along anyhow,' he says. 'I want to eat a cutlet, have a bottle of French wine, enjoy myself in the theatre

too, you understand. . . .' 'Well, you must excuse me,' said the director. 'For all that you must, in a manner of speaking, have patience. You have been given something to keep you for the time, till instructions arrive, and no doubt you will be properly pensioned, for it has never happened yet that among us in Russia a man who has, in a manner of speaking, deserved well of his country should be left without recognition. But if you want to pamper yourself with cutlets and the theatre, then you must excuse me. In that case, you must find the means and do what you can for yourself.' But my Kopeykin, can you fancy, did not turn a hair. Those words bounced off him like peas against a wall. He made such an uproar, he did let them have it! He began going for them all and swearing at them, all of them, the head clerks and the secretaries. 'You are this,' he said, 'you are that,' he said, 'you don't know your duties,' he said. He gave them all a dressing. A general turned up, you know, from quite a different department; he went for him too, my good sir! He made such a row. What's to be done with a beggar like that? The director sees that they must have recourse, so to say, to stern measures. 'Very good,' he says, 'if you won't be satisfied with what is given you, and wait quietly, in a manner of speaking, here in the capital for your case to be settled, I will find a lodging for you elsewhere. Call the attendant,' he said, 'take him to a place of detention!' And the attendant was there already, you understand, at the door, a man seven feet high, with a great fist made by nature for a driver, only fancy, a regular dentist, in fact. . . . So they put him, the servant of God, into a cart, with the attendant. 'Well,' thinks Kopeykin, 'I shan't

have to pay my fare, anyway, that is something to be thankful for.' He goes in the cart, and as he goes he thinks: 'Very good,' he thinks, 'you told me I must find means for myself; very good, I will find them!' Well, how they took him to his destination and where he was taken, no one knows. All traces of Captain Kopeykin were lost, you understand, in the waters of oblivion, in Lethe, or whatever the poets call it. But here, gentlemen, allow me to point out, begins the gist of the story. What became of Kopeykin no one knows, but before two months had passed, would you believe it, a band of robbers made their appearance in the forests of Ryazan and the chief of that band, my good sir, was no other than . . ."

"But excuse me, Ivan Andreyevitch," said the police-master, suddenly interrupting him, "why, you said yourself that Captain Kopeykin lost an arm and a leg, while Tchitchikov has . . ."

The postmaster cried out, slapped himself on the forehead and called himself a calf publicly before them all. He could not understand how the circumstance had not occurred to him at the beginning of the story, and confessed that the saying, "The Russian is wise after the event," was perfectly true. A minute later, however, he began to be ingenious and tried to wriggle out of it, saying that mechanical limbs had been brought to a wonderful perfection in England, that it seemed from the papers that a man had invented artificial legs, that by merely touching an unseen spring would carry a man goodness knows where, so that he could never be found again.

But every one was extremely doubtful whether Tchitchikov really was Captain Kopeykin, and thought the postmaster was a little wide of the mark. However,

they would not own themselves beaten either, and inspired by the postmaster's clever suggestion, made others that were almost more far-fetched. Among a number of sagacious theories there was one, strange to say, that Tchitchikov might be Napoleon in disguise, that the English had long been envious of the greatness and vast expanse of Russia—there had actually been on several occasions cartoons in which a Russian was represented talking to an Englishman, the Englishman was holding a dog on a cord behind him, and the dog of course stood for Napoleon: "Mind," he was saying, "if there is anything I don't like I will let the dog off." And now perhaps they really had let him out from the island of St. Helena, and now here he was wandering about Russia got up as Tchitchikov, though he was really not Tchitchikov at all.

Of course the officials did not fully believe this, but they grew very thoughtful, and each separately thinking the matter over, decided that Tchitchikov, if he were turned round and looked at sideways, was very much like the portraits of Napoleon. The police-master, who had served in the campaign of 1812 and had seen Napoleon in person, could not but admit that he was no taller than Tchitchikov, and that in figure Napoleon could not be said to be too stout, though on the other hand he was far from thin. Perhaps some of my readers will call this improbable; the author is quite prepared to oblige them by confessing that it is most improbable; but unfortunately it all happened precisely as described, and what makes it the more astonishing is that the town was not far away in the wilds, but, on the contrary, no great distance from both capitals. But it must be remembered that all this happened very shortly after the glorious expulsion of

the French. At that period all our landowners, officials and merchants and shopmen and every one that could read and write, and even illiterate peasants, became at least for eight years inveterate politicians. The *Moscow News* and the *Sun of the Fatherland* were read with merciless zeal, and reached the last reader in tatters quite useless for any purpose whatever. Instead of such questions as: "At what price were they selling the measure of oats, sir?" "Did you get any fun out of the snow we had yesterday?" they used to ask: "What news is there in the paper? Haven't they let Napoleon out of the Island again?" The merchants were in the greatest apprehension of this, for they put implicit faith in the predictions of a prophet who had been for three years in prison. No one knew where the prophet came from, he made his appearance wearing bark shoes, and an unlined sheepskin and smelling terribly of stale fish, and announced that Napoleon was Antichrist, and was bound by a stone chain behind six walls and seven seas, but later on would break his chain and gain possession of the whole world. The prophet was very properly put into prison for his predictions, but nevertheless he had done his work and completely confounded the merchants. Long afterwards, even at a time of most profitable transactions, the merchants talked of Antichrist when they went to the tavern to drink their tea. Many of the official class and of the gentry could not help thinking about it too, and infected by the mysticism which was, as is well known, all the fashion then, saw in every letter of the name Napoleon some peculiar significance, some even discovered Apocalyptic numbers in it. And so there is nothing surprising in the fact that the officials unconsciously thought on the same lines; but

they soon pulled themselves together, realising that their imaginations were running away with them, and that all this was nonsense. They pondered and pondered and discussed and discussed and at last decided that it would not be amiss to question Nozdryov thoroughly again. Since he was the first to tell the story of the dead souls and was, so it was said, on very intimate terms with Tchitchikov, and therefore would undoubtedly know something about the circumstances of his life, it was decided to try again what Nozdryov could tell them.

Strange people were these official gentlemen, and so indeed are the gentlemen of all other callings too: they knew perfectly well that Nozdryov was a liar, that one could not believe a word he said, even about the merest trifle, and yet they had recourse to him! Explain man if you can! He doesn't believe in God but be believes that if the bridge of his nose is scratched he will die; he passes by the work of a poet clear as daylight, all bathed in harmony and the sublime wisdom of simplicity, and pounces eagerly on the work of some audacious fellow who muddles, twists, and distorts nature, and he is delighted with it and cries: "This is it, here is real comprehension of the mysteries of the heart!" All his life he has despised doctors and ends by consulting some peasant woman who cures him by muttering spells and using spittle, or better still invents for himself some decoction of goodness knows what rubbish, which he regards as a remedy for his complaints, God knows why. Of course the officials may be to some extent excused by the really difficult position in which they were placed. A drowning man will catch even at a straw, they say, and he has not the sense at the moment to reflect that a fly could

scarcely save itself on a straw, while he weighs eleven if not twelve stone; but that consideration does not occur to him at that moment, and he clutches at the straw. So our friends clutched at Nozdryov. The police-master immediately wrote a note to him, inviting him to an evening party. And a policeman in big boots, with engagingly rosy cheeks, ran off instantly, with his hand upon his sword, to Nozdryov's rooms. Nozdryov was engaged upon something very important; it was four whole days since he had kept his room, admitting no one, and having his food passed in at his window, in fact he had actually grown thin and sallow. It was a business that called for the closest attention; it consisted of making up out of several hundreds of cards a complete suit of the most recognisable, upon which he could rely as upon a faithful friend. He had at least another fortnight's work before him. All this time, Porfiry had to brush a mastiff puppy with a special brush and to wash it with soap three times a day. Nozdryov was very angry at his solitude being broken in upon; first of all, he sent the policeman to the devil, but when he read in the letter that he might reckon on winning something, as a novice at cards was expected at the party, he immediately locked the door of his room, dressed himself after a fashion and set off. Nozdryov's statements, his evidence and his suppositions were so completely the opposite of those of the officials that every theory they had was confounded. He was a man for whom doubt did not exist, and there was as much decision and certainty about his suppositions as there was hesitation and timidity about theirs. He answered every question without faltering: he declared Tchitchikov had bought thousands of roubles' worth of dead souls, and that he,

Nozdryov, had sold them, because he did not see any reason why he shouldn't. To the question whether he was a spy and whether he was trying to find out something, Nozdryov answered that he was a spy; that even at school, where Nozdryov was with him, they used to call him a tell-tale, and that his schoolfellows, among them Nozdryov himself, had knocked him about for it so much that he had had to have two hundred and forty leeches put on his temples, that is, he meant to say forty but two hundred had somehow got said of itself. To the question whether he was a forger of counterfeit notes Nozdryov answered that he was, and thereupon told an anecdote of Tchitchikov's extraordinary dexterity; how it was found out that there were in his house counterfeit notes for two million roubles, a seal was put on the house, and two soldiers were set to keep guard at every door, and how Tchitchikov changed all the notes in a single night so that when the seal was taken off the next day, the notes were found to be all genuine. To the question whether Tchitchikov were designing to elope with the governor's daughter, and whether it were true that he had himself undertaken to assist him and to take part in arranging it, Nozdryov answered that he had helped him and that nothing would have come off without him. Here he pulled himself up, realising that he had told quite an unnecessary lie, and might get himself into trouble, but his tongue ran away with him. And it was particularly difficult to restrain it, for so many interesting details which he could not possibly sacrifice rose before his imagination. For instance, the very village in the parish church of which it was arranged that the wedding should take place was mentioned by name as

Truhmatchevka, the priest, Father Sidor, was to be paid seventy-five roubles for the wedding, and he would not have agreed to do it even for that if Nozdryov had not scared him, threatening to inform the police that he had illegally married a corn-dealer called Mihail, to a girl who had stood godmother to a child of which the latter was the godfather; that he had offered the use of his carriage and had bespoken relays of horses at the posting stations. He went so far into details as even to mention the names of the drivers.

They tried dropping a hint about Napoleon, but regretted doing so afterwards, for Nozdryov went off into a rigmarole which not only had no semblance of truth, but had actually no semblance of anything whatever, so much so that the officials all walked away with a sigh; only the police-master went on listening to him, thinking that something might crop up later, but at last he too made a gesture of despair, saying: "What the devil is one to make of it!" And all agreed that, "do what you will with a bull you can never get milk out of him," and the officials found themselves in a worse position than before, and the upshot of it was that they could not possibly find out who Tchitchikov was. And what followed showed distinctly what a strange sort of creature man is: he is wise, clever, sensible in everything that concerns other people but not in what concerns himself. How well he is provided with resolute and prudent counsels in the difficult crises of life! "How quick and resourceful a brain!" cries the crowd, "what a resolute character!" But let some misfortune befall that quick and resourceful man, let him be put in a difficult position himself, and what becomes of his character! The resolute man is utterly

distracted, and turns into a pitiful coward, a weak insignificant baby or simply a muff, as Nozdryov called it.

All these discussions, opinions and rumours for some unaccountable reason affected the poor prosecutor more than any one else. They had such an effect upon him that on reaching home he fell to brooding, and suddenly, for no rhyme or reason as the saying is, died. Whether it was a paralytic stroke or some other attack, anyway, while he was sitting at the table he flopped forward on his face. As is usual on such occasions, people cried out, "Good God!" and flinging up their hands, sent for the doctor to bleed him, but saw that the prosecutor was a soulless corpse. It was only then they recognised with regret that he really had a soul, though he had always been too modest to show it. And meanwhile death was as terrible in a small man as in a great one: a man who had only lately been walking about, moving, playing whist, and signing various papers, and who had been so often seen among the other officials with his thick eyebrows and his winking eye, was now lying on the table; his left eye did not wink now at all, but one eyebrow was still raised with questioning expression. What the dead man was inquiring about, why he died or why he had lived—God only knows.

"But this is absurd though! It's out of the question! It's impossible that officials could scare themselves so, could make up such nonsense, could stray so far from the truth when a child could have seen through it!" Many readers will say this, and will blame the author for improbability, or will call the poor officials fools, for man is lavish in the use of the word fool, and is ready to apply it to his neighbour twenty times a day.

It is quite enough if out of ten points in his character he has one stupid one, for him to be set down as a fool in spite of his nine good points. It is easy for readers to criticise, looking down from their comfortable niche on the heights from which the whole horizon lies open, at all that is taking place below, where man can only see the object nearest to him. And in the history of humanity there are many whole centuries which he would, I fancy, strike out and suppress as unnecessary. Many mistakes have been made in the world which now one would hardly think a child could make. How many crooked, narrow, impassable blind alleys, leading far off the track, has mankind chosen in the effort to reach the eternal verity, while before him the straight road lay open like the road that leads to a magnificent mansion destined to be a royal palace! It is broader and more splendid than all the other paths, with the sun lighting it up by day and many lights by night. But men have streamed past it in blind darkness. And how many times even when guided by understanding that has been given them from heaven, they have managed even then to halt and go astray, have managed in the light of day to get into the impassable jungle, have managed to throw a blinding fog again over one another's eyes, and lured by will-of-the-wisps have succeeded in reaching the brink of the abyss, only to ask one another with horror: "Where is the way out? Where is the road?" The present generation sees everything clearly, marvels at the errors and laughs at the follies of its forefathers, not seeing that there are streaks of heavenly light in that history, that every letter in it cries aloud to them, that on all sides a pointing finger is turned upon it, upon the present generation. But the present genera-

tion laughs and proudly, self-confidently, enters upon a series of fresh errors at which their descendants will laugh again in their turn.

Tchitchikov knew absolutely nothing of all this. As ill luck would have it, he had taken a slight chill and had a swollen face and a slight sore throat, in the distribution of which the climate of our provincial towns is extremely liberal. That his life might not—God forbid—be cut short without leaving descendants he thought it better to keep to his bed for three or four days. During those days he was continually gargling with a decoction of milk and figs which he afterwards ate, and bound a bag filled with camomile and camphor on his cheek. To occupy his time he made some new and detailed lists of all the peasants he had bought, read a volume of the Duchesse de la Vallière, which he dug out of his trunk, looked through many notes and other objects in his chest, read something over a second time, and all this bored him horribly. He could not make out how it was that none of the officials of the town had been to inquire after him, though a little while before there had always been a chaise standing before the hotel door—either the postmaster's, the prosecutor's or the president's. But he only shrugged his shoulders as he walked up and down the room. At last he felt better and was highly delighted when he saw that he could go out in the open air. Without delay he set to work to get ready, opened his case, poured some hot water into a glass, took out his shaving brush and his soap, and proceeded to shave, and indeed it was high time he did, for feeling his chin with his hand and looking into the glass he exclaimed: "Ough, what a forest!" And indeed though it was not a forest there was a very thick growth over

his cheeks and under his chin. When he had shaved he began to dress rapidly, so much so that he almost jumped out of his trousers. At last he was dressed, sprinkled with eau-de-Cologne and, warmly wrapped up, made his way down into the street, keeping his cheek bandaged as a precaution. Going out was for him, as for every convalescent, like a holiday. Everything that caught his eye looked smiling,—the houses, and some passing peasants who however did in reality look glum, and one of whom had just boxed his brother's ears. He meant to pay his first visit to the governor. All sorts of ideas came into his mind on the road: the fair daughter was continually in his thoughts, and he indulged in flights of fancy, till at last he began to mock and laugh at himself. In such a frame of mind he reached the governor's door. He was on the point of hurriedly flinging off his overcoat in the entrance hall, when the hall porter astonished him by the utterly unexpected words: "I've orders not to admit you."

"What! what do you mean! I suppose you don't know me? You should look at one more carefully!" Tchitchikov said to him.

"Not know you indeed, it is not the first time I have seen you," said the porter. "Why it is just you I've orders not to let in, I may admit any one else."

"Well, upon my soul! Why? What for?"

"That's my orders; so I suppose that's right," said the hall porter, and added the word, "Yes," after which he stood facing him in the most free and easy attitude, completely dropping the ingratiating air with which on other occasions he had hastened to help him off with his coat. He seemed as he looked at him to think, "Aha, since their Excellencies kick you out of the door you must be a low rascal!"

"How inexplicable!" Tchitchikov thought to himself, and he set off at once to call upon the president of the court of justice, but the president was so overwhelmed with confusion on seeing him that he could not utter anything coherent, and talked such utter twaddle that they were both abashed. On leaving him Tchitchikov did his very utmost to understand what the president had meant and what his words could refer to, yet he could make nothing out of them. Then he went on to the others: to the police-master, to the deputy-governor, to the postmaster, but either they were not at home to him, or they received him so strangely, made such constrained and unaccountable observations, were so disconcerted, and the general effect of irrational incoherence was such that he began to have doubts of their sanity. He tried going on to some one else in the hope of finding out the reason anyway, but he could not get at the reason. Like a man half awake he wandered aimlessly about the town, unable to decide whether he had gone out of his mind or the officials had gone out of theirs, or whether it was all a dream or whether it was a reality more absurd than any dream. It was late, almost getting dusk, when at last he went back to his hotel which he had left that morning in such a pleasant state of mind, and feeling dull, he ordered tea to be sent up. Musing and absent-mindedly brooding over the strangeness of his position, he began to pour out his tea when suddenly the door of his room was opened and Nozdryov most unexpectedly stood before him.

"As the proverb has it, 'to see a friend, five miles is not out of one's way,'" he said, taking off his cap. "I was passing and saw the light in the window. 'There,' I thought, 'I'll go in, no doubt he is still

up.' And it is first rate that you have got tea on the table, I shall enjoy a cup: I ate all sorts of rubbish at dinner to-day, I feel as though there were a riot beginning in my stomach. Tell your man to fill me a pipe! Where is your pipe?"

"I don't smoke a pipe," said Tchitchikov drily.

"Nonsense, as though I don't know you are a smoker. Hi, what's your fellow's name? Hi, Vahramey, I say."

"Not Vahramey but Petrushka!"

"How is that? You did have a Vahramey?"

"I never had a man called Vahramey."

"Oh yes, it is at Derebin's that there is a Vahramey. Only fancy, what luck for Derebin: his aunt has quarrelled with her son because he has married a serf girl, and now she has left him all her property. I thought to myself if only one could have an aunt like that for the sake of the future! But how is it, old man, you have kept away from all of us and have not been near any one? Of course I know you are sometimes engaged in abstruse studies, you are fond of reading" (on what ground Nozdryov believed that Tchitchikov was engaged in abstruse subjects and was fond of reading we must own we cannot tell, and still less could Tchitchikov). "Ah, Tchitchikov, old man, if you had only seen . . . it really would have been a subject for your sarcastic wit" (why Tchitchikov was supposed to have a sarcastic wit is unknown also). "Only fancy, old boy, we were having a game of cards at the merchant Lihatchev's, and didn't we have fun there too! Perependev who was with me, 'If only Tchitchikov were here,' said he, 'it would be just the thing for him. . . .'" (Tchitchikov had never known any one called Perependev in his life.' "'But you must own up, old boy, you did play me a nasty trick, do you remember, over that

game of draughts? I won it, you know . . . Yes, old man, you simply did me over that. But there I don't know how the devil it is but I can't be cross. The other day at the president's . . . Ah, yes, I ought to tell you every one in the town is turned against you. They imagine you forge notes. They kept pestering me about you, I stood up for you like a rock—I told them I had been to school with you and knew your father; and there, there's no denying I pitched them a fine tale."

"I forge notes!" cried Tchitchikov, getting up from his seat.

"Why did you give them such a fright though?" Nozdryov went on. "They are terrified out of their wits, the devil knows why: they take you for a brigand and a spy. And the prosecutor has died of fright; the funeral is to-morrow. Won't you be there? To tell the truth they are afraid of the new governor-general, in case there may be trouble about you. But what I think about the governor-general is, that if he is stuck up and gives himself airs he certainly won't be able to do anything with the nobility. The nobility insist on hospitality, don't they? Of course he can shut himself up in his study if he likes and not give a single ball, but what's the use of that? There is no gaining anything by that. But you know, Tchitchikov, it is a risky business you are going in for."

"What risky business?" Tchitchikov asked uneasily.

"Why, eloping with the governor's daughter, I must own I expected it, I did, upon my soul. The first time I saw you together at the ball I thought to myself: 'I'll be bound Tchitchikov is up to something. . . .' But you have made a poor choice, I see nothing in her. Now there is one, a relation of

Bikusov's, his sister's daughter—that is something like a girl! a wonderful little bit of goods!"

"What do you mean? what are you talking about? Elope with the governor's daughter? What do you mean?" said Tchitchikov, with his eyes starting out of his head.

"Oh, drop that, old boy, you are a close one. I'll own I came to you to tell you I am ready to help you. So be it: I'll hold the wedding crown over your head, I'll provide the carriage and the changes of horses, only on one condition: you must lend me three thousand roubles. I must have it if I die for it."

While Nozdryov was rattling on, Tchitchikov several times rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was not hearing all this in a dream. The charge of forging counterfeit notes, the elopement with the governor's daughter, the death of the prosecutor, of which Tchitchikov was supposed to be the cause, the arrival of the new governor-general—all this excited considerable alarm.

"Well, if it has come to this," he thought to himself, "it's no good lingering on here, I must make haste and get away."

He tried to get rid of Nozdryov as quickly as he could, at once sent for Selifan and told him to be ready at daybreak, so that they could leave the town at six o'clock next morning without fail, to look over everything, see that the carriage was greased and so on, and so on. Selifan articulated, "Yes, Pavel Ivanovitch," but remained for some minutes standing motionless at the door. Our hero bade Petrushka pull the portmanteau, by now thickly covered with dust, from under the bed and began packing indiscriminately stockings, shirts, underlinen washed and un-

washed, boot trees, a calendar. . . . All this was packed anyhow: he wanted to make sure of being ready so that nothing could happen to detain him in the morning. Selifan after standing for two minutes at the door went slowly away. He went slowly, as slowly as possible downstairs, leaving traces of his wet boots on the steps worn hollow by long use, and he stood for a long time scratching the back of his head. What did that scratching signify? and what does it indicate as a rule? Was it vexation at missing the meeting planned for the next day in some imperial tavern with a fellow coachman, clad in an unattractive sheepskin with a sash tied round the waist, or had some little affair of the heart developed in this new place, and had he to give up standing in the evenings at the gate and diplomatically holding white hands at the hour when twilight drops upon the town, when a lad in a red shirt twangs on the balalaika before the assembled house serfs, and working people of all sorts after their toil exchange quiet talk? Or was he simply sorry to leave the snug place he had made for himself under a sheepskin by the stove in the servants' kitchen, and the cabbage soup with the tender little town-made pies, to go dragging again through the rain and the sleet and all the hardships of the road? God knows,—there is no guessing. Scratching the head signifies all manner of things among the Russian people.

CHAPTER XI

NOTHING happened however as Tchitchikov intended. To begin with, he woke later than he expected—that was the first mishap. As soon as he was up he sent to inquire whether the chaise had been packed and everything got ready; but they brought him word that the chaise had not been prepared and nothing was ready—that was the second mishap. He was very angry, and even made up his mind to give our friend Selifan something like a drubbing, and only waited with impatience to hear what explanation the latter would give to justify himself. Selifan soon made his appearance at the door, and Tchitchikov had the satisfaction of hearing from his lips the sayings usually heard from servants when one is in a hurry to set off.

"But the horses want shoeing, you know, Pavel Ivanovitch."

"Oh you pig's face! you post! Why did you not speak about it before? Surely you had plenty of time, hadn't you?"

"Why yes, I had time. And then there's the wheel too, Pavel Ivanovitch, there ought to be new tires for the road is all, ups and downs, there are such ruts everywhere now. . . . And if you will allow me to say so, the front part of the chaise is very rickety, so that maybe it would hardly last beyond two posting stations."

"You scoundrel!" cried Tchitchikov, flinging up his hands, and he went up to him so close that Selifan stepped back a little and ducked to one side, afraid he was going to get something from his master.

"Do you want to be the death of me, eh? Do you mean to bring me to my grave? Do you mean to murder me on the road, you ruffian, you damned pig's face, you sea monster, eh? Haven't you been doing nothing here for three weeks? If you had only dropped a hint, you senseless brute, but here you put it off till the last minute. When everything is almost ready for me to get in and set off, here you go and make a mess of it all, eh, eh? Didn't you know it before? You knew it, didn't you, didn't you? Answer. Did you know?"

"Yes, I did," answered Selifan, looking down.

"Then why didn't you tell me, eh?"

To this question Selifan made no reply, but looking down seemed to be saying to himself: "'Pon my soul, it's a queer thing, I knew, but I didn't say anything."

"Well, now go and get the blacksmiths, and have everything ready in two hours' time. Do you hear? In two hours' time without fail, and if it isn't, I'll . . . I'll twist you into a horn and tie you in a knot."

Selifan was turning towards the door to retire and carry out these instructions, but he stopped and said: "And another thing, sir, that dappled horse ought to be sold, for he is a regular rascal, Pavel Ivanovitch, please God I never see his like again, he is nothing but a hindrance."

"So I am to go and run off to the market to sell him!"

"As God's above, Pavel Ivanovitch, to look at him

he is a likely horse, but that's all, when it comes to work he is a sly brute; you'd never find another like him. . . ."

"You fool, when I want to sell him I'll sell him. Here you go maundering on about all sorts of things! I'll see to you; if you don't get the blacksmiths at once, and if everything is not ready in two hours from now, I'll give you such a dressing . . . you won't know whether you are on your head or your feet! Get along! Be off!" Selifan went out.

Tchitchikov felt thoroughly out of temper and threw down on the floor the sword that always travelled with him to inspire befitting terror wherever necessary. He was over a quarter of an hour bargaining with the blacksmiths before he could come to terms with them, for the blacksmiths, as usual, were arrant knaves, and seeing that the work was wanted in a hurry asked six times the proper price. Though he grew heated, called them swindlers and robbers who plundered travellers, and even referred to the Day of Judgment, he made no impression whatever on the blacksmiths, they stuck to their guns, not only refused to knock the price down but took five and a half hours over the work instead of two. During this time it was his pleasant lot to experience those agreeable moments, familiar to every traveller, when everything is packed and nothing but bits of string and paper and such rubbish is left lying about the room, when a man is neither on the road nor settled in one spot, when he looks out of window at the people passing up and down and talking of their gains and losses, and with a sort of vacant curiosity raising their eyes to stare at him and then going on their way, which further aggravates the ill humour of the poor traveller who cannot get off.

Everything about him, everything he sees: the little shops opposite his windows and the head of the old woman opposite, as she goes up to the window with the short curtains—it is all distasteful to him, and yet he does not move away from the window. He stands there sometimes lost in oblivion, sometimes again paying a sort of dull attention to everything moving and unmoving about him, and in his vexation crushes a fly which buzzes and beats against the window-pane under his finger.

But there is an end to everything and the longed-for moment arrived, everything was ready, the front part of the chaise had been properly repaired, the wheels had new tires, the horses had been brought back from the drinking place, and the rascally blacksmiths departed, counting over their roubles and wishing him a good journey. At last the chaise was packed and two fancy loaves, hot from the baker's, had been put in, and Selifan had stuffed something for himself in the pocket in the coachman's box, and finally, while the waiter in the same cotton shoddy coat waved his cap, while the assembled waiters from the restaurants and coachmen and other servants stood gaping at the departure of some one else's master, amid the various other circumstances attendant on departure, our hero got into his carriage, and the chaise—of the pattern favoured by bachelor gentlemen of the middling sort—which had so long been stationary in the town, and with which the reader is perhaps so bored, at last drove out of the gates of the hotel. "Thank God," thought Tchitchikov, and he crossed himself. Selifan cracked his whip, Petrushka after first hanging on for some time on the step, sat down beside him, and our hero, settling himself more comfortably in his Georgian rug

and flattening the two hot loaves together, thrust the leather pillow behind his back, and the chaise fell to jolting and hopping up and down again, thanks to the cobble-stones which had, as the reader knows, wonderful resilient properties. With a vague, undefined feeling he looked at the houses, the walls, the fences and the streets, which seeming to dance up and down too, gradually retreated, and which there was no knowing whether he was fated to see again in his life. At a turning in one of the streets the chaise had to pull up because an endless funeral procession was passing up the whole length of it. Tchitchikov, putting his head out, told Petrushka to inquire whose funeral it was, and learned that it was the prosecutor's. Overcome by an unpleasant feeling he hid himself in the corner, covered himself with the leather apron, and pulled the curtain over the window. While the chaise was held up, Selifan and Petrushka, devoutly taking off their hats, were looking to see who were driving or riding, and how and in or on what they were doing so, counting how many there were on foot and in carriages, and their master, bidding them not greet or recognise any of their acquaintances, began timidly looking too through the little pane in the leather curtain. All the officials walked bareheaded after the coffin. He began to be afraid that his carriage might be recognised, but no one noticed it. They were not even indulging in the trivial talk which is usually kept up by persons attending a funeral. At that moment all their thoughts were concentrated on themselves: they were wondering what the new governor-general would be like, how he would set to work and how he would take them. The officials who were walking were followed by carriages out of which peeped ladies in mourning caps. From

the movements of their hands and lips, it could be seen that they were engaged in eager conversation: possibly they, too, were discussing the arrival of the governor-general, and speculating about the balls he would give, and were busily chattering about their everlasting festoons and frills. Then the carriages were followed by a file of empty droshkys, and at last there was nothing left to come, so that our hero could drive on. Drawing back the leather curtain, he heaved a sigh, and exclaimed from his heart: "So much for the prosecutor! He lived and lived and then he died! And now they will print in the newspapers that he has passed away to the grief of his subordinates and of all humanity, an honoured citizen, a devoted father, a faithful husband, and they will write all sorts of nonsense; they will very likely add that he was followed to the grave by the lamentations of widows and orphans; and yet if one goes into the facts of the case, it turns out on investigation that there was nothing special about you but your thick eyebrows." Here he told Selifan to drive faster, while he thought to himself, "Well, it is a good thing we met the funeral, they say meeting a funeral means happiness."

Meanwhile the chaise had turned into more deserted streets, and soon wooden fences stretching each side of the road showed the end of the town was near. And now the cobbled road ceased and the barrier and the town were left behind and nothing remained, and they were on the high road once more. Soon they saw again milestones, superintendents of posting stations, wells, strings of wagons, grey villages with samovars, with peasant women and a brisk bearded innkeeper, running out of his yard with oats in his arms, a wayfarer in

frayed bark shoes who had wandered some six hundred miles, little towns run up in a hurry with wretched little wooden shops, flour barrels, bark shoes, fancy rolls and other such trifles, spotted barrier posts, patched up bridges, interminable fields on both sides of the road, old-fashioned country gentlemen's coaches, a soldier on horseback, carrying a green box with grapeshot, with a label on it of some Artillery Battery, green, yellow, and freshly dug black strips of land flashing by on the steppe, a song chanted in the distance, the crests of pine-trees in the mist, the jingle of bells in the distance, crows as thick as flies, and a boundless horizon. Russia! Russia! I behold thee, from my lovely far-away paradise, I behold thee! It is poor, neglected and comfortless in thee, no insolent marvels of nature crowned by insolent marvels of art, no towns with many-windowed lofty palaces piled in precipitous heights, no picturesque trees, no ivy-clad houses in the roar and everlasting spray of waterfalls rejoice the eye or strike awe into the heart; the head is not turned to gaze at the rocks piled up on the heights above it; no everlasting lines of shining mountains rising into the silvery pure skies gleam in the distance through dark arches, scattered one upon the other in a tangle of vines, ivy and wild roses beyond number. In thee all is open, desolate, flat; thy lowly towns lie scattered like dots, like specks unseen among thy plains; there is nothing to allure or captivate the eye. But what mysterious inexplicable force draws one to thee? Why does the mournful song that floats all over the length and breadth of thee from sea to sea echo unceasingly in the ear? What is in it, in that song? What is it calls and sobs and clutches at my heart? What are these strains that so poignantly greet me, that go straight to

my soul, that throb about my heart? Russia! what wouldst thou of me? What is the mysterious hidden bond between us? Why dost thou gaze at me thus, and why is everything within thee turning upon me eyes full of expectation? . . . And still full of perplexity I stand motionless; and already a threatening cloud, heavy with coming rain, looms above my head, and thought is numb before thy vast expanse. What does that immense expanse foretell? Is it not here, is it not in thee that limitless thought will arise, since thou art thyself without limit? . . . Is it not here there should be giants where there is space for them to develop and move freely. And thy mighty expanse enfolds me menacingly, with fearful force reflected in the depths of me; with supernatural power light dawns upon my eyes. . . . Ah, marvellous, radiant horizons of which the earth knows nothing! Russia!

"Steady, steady, you fool!" Tchitchikov shouted to Selifan.

"I'll hang you," shouted a courier with moustaches a yard long, who was galloping towards them. "Don't you see a government carriage, the devil flay your soul?" and the troika vanished amid dust and rattle.

How strange, alluring, stimulating and wonderful is the sound of the words "on the road." And how marvellous that road is! The sunny day, the autumn leaves, the cold air. . . . Wrapped more closely in one's winter coat, cap over ears, one huddles more snugly into the corner. For the last time a faint shiver passes through the limbs and is followed by a pleasant warmth. The horses race along . . . how seductively drowsiness steals over one and the eyelids close, and through sleep one hears, "Not white were the snows," and the breathing of the horses and the rumble of the wheels,

and one snores, squeezing one's neighbour into the corner. One wakes—five stations are left behind; moonlight; an unfamiliar town; churches with old-fashioned wooden cupolas and blackened spires; dark log houses and white brick ones; patches of moonlight here and there like white linen handkerchiefs hung upon the walls, the pavements, the streets; slanting, coal black shadows intersect them; the wooden roofs shine like gleaming metal in the moonlight and not a soul to be seen, everything is asleep. At most one solitary light glimmers at a window, is it a workman mending his boots, or a baker busy with his oven—what do they matter? And the night! . . . Heavenly powers! What a night is being enacted on high! And the air, and the sky, lofty, far away yonder, in its fathomless depths, stretching in all directions, so infinitely, so harmoniously, so radiantly! But the cold breath of the night blows fresh upon the eyes and lulls one to sleep, and one doses, sinks into forgetfulness, and snores, and one's poor neighbour, squeezed into the corner, turns around angrily feeling a weight upon him. One wakes —and again, fields and plains before one; nothing to be seen, it is all deserted and open. A milestone with a number on it flies into sight; daybreak is near; on the cold whitening horizon there is a pale streak of gold; the wind grows colder and harsher: one pulls one's coat more closely round one! What delicious freshness! How delightful is the sleep that comes over one again! A jolt—and again one wakes. The sun is high up in the sky. "Gently, gently!" cries a voice, the chaise is going down a steep place; below, a broad dam and a broad shining pond gleaming like copper in the sun; a village; huts scattered on the slope; the cross of the village church glittering like a star on one

side; the chatter of peasants and the ravenous appetite for breakfast. . . . My God, how glorious at times is the long, long road! How often have I, drowning and perishing, clutched at thee, and always thou hast rescued and preserved me! And how many wonderful plans and poetical dreams hast thou brought forth, what glorious impressions have I experienced on the road. And indeed our friend Tchitchikov was indulging in reveries not altogether prosaic. Let us see what he was feeling. At first he felt nothing at all, and simply kept looking back as though to make sure that he really had got out of the town; but when he saw that the town had long been out of sight, that neither smithy nor mill nor any of the objects usual on the outskirts of a town were visible, and that even the white spires of the white churches had long since melted into the landscape, his attention was absorbed by nothing but the road, he kept looking to right and left, and it seemed as though the town of N. had passed out of his memory, as though he had passed through it long ago in his childhood. At last the road too ceased to occupy his mind, and he began to half-close his eyes and lean his head on the pillow. The author confesses that he is glad of the opportunity of talking a little about his hero, for hitherto he has always been hindered from doing so either by Nozdryov or by balls or by ladies, or by the scandal of the town, in short, by the thousand and one trivialities which only seem trivialities when they are brought into a book, while in the world they pass for very important matters. But now we will lay aside everything else and go straight to the point.

It is very doubtful whether the reader will like the hero we have selected. That he will not please the

ladies one may say with certainty, for ladies insist on a hero's being absolute perfection, and if he has some tiny spiritual or physical blemish then—there's trouble! However deeply the author gazes into his soul, and though he may reflect it more clearly than a mirror, they will give him no credit for it. Tchitchikov's very stoutness and middle age will do him great damage in their eyes: they will never forgive stoutness in a hero under any circumstances, and very many ladies will turn away, saying, Fie! what a horrid man! Alas! the author is very well aware of all this, and yet he cannot take a virtuous man for his hero. But . . . perhaps in this very novel some chords hitherto unstruck may be discerned, the infinite wealth of the Russian soul may be set forth, a man endowed with divine qualities, or a wonderful Russian maiden, such as cannot be found elsewhere in the world, with the marvellous beauty of a woman's soul made up of generous impulse and self-sacrifice, may emerge. And all the virtuous people of other races will seem dead beside them as a book is dead beside the living word! Russian emotions will arise. They will see how deeply what has only glided through the nature of other peoples has taken root in the nature of the Russians. . . . But what use or reason is there to speak of what is in the future? It is unseemly for the author, a man of full age, disciplined by a harsh inner life and the invigorating sobriety of solitude, to forget himself like a boy. There is a fitting time and place for everything! But all the same I have not taken a virtuous man for my hero. And I may even say why I have not. Because it is high time at last to let the poor virtuous man rest; because the phrase "virtuous man" is too often taken in vain, because they have made a regular hack of the virtuous

man and there is not a writer who has not ridden him to death, lashing him on with whip or anything that comes to hand; because they have so overdone the virtuous man that there is not a shadow of virtue left about him, and he is nothing but skin and bone; because it is through hypocrisy they invoke the virtuous man; because the virtuous man is not respected. No, the time has come at last to trot out the rascal! And so let us trot out the rascal!

Our hero's origin was humble and obscure. His parents were of the nobility, but whether by birth or by merit—God only knows. He did not resemble them in face. Anyway, a female relation who was present at his birth, a short little woman, one of those intrusive fussy people commonly called "lapwings," cried out as she took the baby in her arms: "He is not a bit what I expected! He ought to have been like his granny on his mother's side, that would have been the best, but he reminds me of the saying: not like father nor like mother, but like a passing stranger." Life looked at him at first with sour inhospitality as through a dim snow-darkened window; he had no friend, no comrade in his childhood! A tiny room with tiny windows, never opened, summer or winter; his father, an invalid in a long lambswool-lined coat, with slippers on his bare feet, for ever sighing and wandering about the room and spitting into a spittoon full of sand in a corner; the boy, everlastingly sitting on a bench with a pen in his hand, ink on his fingers and even on his lips; the everlasting copy before his eyes, "Speak the truth, be obedient to your elders, and cherish virtue in your heart"; with the everlasting flap and shuffle of the slippers about the room, the familiar, always harsh voice calling out, "In

mischief again," when the child, weary with the monotony of his work, drew some flourish or tail on a letter; and everlastingly the familiar and always unpleasant sensation when these words were followed by his ears being very painfully wrung by the long clawing fingers behind him: such is the pitiful picture of the early childhood of which he retained scarcely a faint memory. But in life everything changes rapidly, and one day with the first sunshine and rushing floods of spring, the father, taking his son with him, drove out in a little cart, drawn by a piebald nag with a white mouth, of the kind known among horse-dealers as magpies. She was driven by a little hunchback who performed almost all the duties in the house, and was the progenitor of the only family of serfs owned by Tchitchikov's father. With the magpie they were driving for over a day and a half; they stayed a night on the road, crossed a river, lunched on cold pie and roast mutton, and only reached the town on the morning of the third day. The streets of the town dazzled the boy with their unexpected splendour and made him gape with wonder. Then the magpie lurched with the cart into a big hole at the entrance of a narrow lane which ran downhill and was thick with mud. There she was a long time struggling her utmost and working her legs, urged on by the hunchback and the master himself, and at last she dragged them into a little yard standing on the slope of the hill, with two apple-trees in flower in front of the little old house, and with a humble little garden behind it, consisting of nothing but mountain ashes and elder-trees with a wooden summer-house hidden in its recesses, covered with trellis and with a narrow opaque window. Here there lived a relation, a decrepit old woman who still went to mar-

ket every morning, and dried her stockings on the samovar afterwards. She patted the boy on his cheeks and admired his plumpness. Here he was to remain and to go every day to the town school. After staying the night, his father set off again next morning. At the parting no tears fell from the father's eyes; half a rouble in copper was given the boy for pocket money and to buy sweets, and what was far more important, a judicious admonition: "Mind now, Pavlushka: be diligent with your lessons, don't play the fool or get into mischief, and above all, satisfy your teachers and superiors. If you please your chief you'll get on and be ahead of all the rest, even if you don't do well in your lessons and God has given you no talent. Don't keep company with your schoolfellows, they'll teach you no good; but if you have to, keep company with those who are better off, who may be of use to you. Don't treat any one or offer any one anything, but manage so that you may be treated, and, what is most important of all, take care of your kopeks and save them up: money's the most reliable thing on earth. A schoolfellow or a friend will cheat you and be the first to fail you in trouble, but your kopeck won't fail you whatever trouble you are in. You can do anything and smash anything in the world with a kopeck." After giving his son this advice, the father parted from him and was dragged home again by the magpie, and he never saw the boy again; but his words and his admonition sank deeply into Pavlushka's heart.

Next day he began going to school. He did not manifest any marked ability for any branch of study, he was more distinguished by diligence and neatness; on the other hand, he displayed a remarkable ability

in another direction—in a practical direction. He instantly took in the situation and succeeded in behaving with his schoolfellows in such a way that they treated him, while he never treated them, and, indeed, sometimes concealed what they had given him and sold it to the very same boys afterwards. Even as a child, he was capable of denying himself anything. Of the half rouble his father had given him he did not spend a kopeck; on the contrary, that same year he added something to it, displaying a resourcefulness almost extraordinary; he moulded a goldfinch in wax and sold it very profitably. And after that he indulged for some time in other speculations, for instance, buying edibles of some sort in the market, he would sit down in class beside boys who were rather well off, and as soon as he noticed his companion showing signs of flagging, always a symptom of approaching hunger, he showed him under the bench as if by accident, the corner of a biscuit or a bun, and after tantalising him with it extorted a sum proportionate to his appetite. For two months he was unwearying in his attentions to a mouse which he kept in a little wooden cage, and succeeded at last in getting the mouse to stand on its hind legs, to lie down and get up at the word of command, and then sold it, also very profitably. When he had saved up five roubles he made a little bag for them and began saving up in a second one. He was even more discreet in his demeanour towards his teachers. No one could sit so quietly on a bench. It must be observed that the teacher made a great point of quietness and good conduct, and could not endure clever or witty boys. He fancied that they must be laughing at him. If one who had come under observation for display of wit merely stirred in his seat

or twitched an eyebrow at the wrong moment, he would incur the teacher's displeasure at once. The latter would turn him out and punish him without mercy. "I'll knock the conceit and disobedience out of you, my lad!" he said. "I know you through and through as you don't know yourself, I'll make you go down on your knees to me! I'll let you go hungry!" And the poor boy wore out his knees and went hungry for days together without knowing what for. "Cleverness and talent are all nonsense," he used to say; "all I look at is conduct. I would give full marks on every subject to a boy who did not know his A B C if he behaved himself properly. And if I see a boy showing a bad spirit or turning things into ridicule, I'd give him a nought, even if he were wiser than Solon." So said the teacher, who had a mortal hatred for Krylov because he said, "Better a drunkard who understands his job than a sober man who doesn't," and who always described with gratification in his face and in his voice, how the stillness in the school in which he used to teach was so great that they could hear a fly move, and that in the course of a whole year not one single pupil coughed or blew his nose in class, and that until the bell rang one could not have told whether there was any one in the room or not. Tchitchikov instantly perceived the master's spirit and saw what good conduct meant. He never blinked an eye or twitched an eyebrow in class, however much the others might pinch him from behind; as soon as the bell rang, he dashed to fetch the master his three-cornered hat (the teacher always wore one); after handing him his hat he was the first to run out of the schoolroom and tried to meet him two or three times on the road, always taking off his hat when he did so. This strategy was

completely successful. All the while he was at school he was in high favour, and on leaving received a full class certificate in all branches, a diploma and a book with the inscription, "For exemplary diligence and excellent conduct," in gold letters. When he left school he was a youth of rather attractive appearance, with a chin that already needed shaving. It was then that his father died.

His inheritance turned out to be four hopelessly wornout vests, two old coats lined with lamb's wool, and a trifling sum of money. The father was evidently only competent to advise saving money, but had himself saved very little. Tchitchikov instantly sold the dilapidated homestead with its wretched little bit of land for a thousand roubles, and took his family of serfs to the town, purposing to settle there and go into the service. It was about this time that the poor teacher who so prized quietness and good conduct was dismissed for stupidity, or some other failing. The teacher began to drown his sorrows in drink, but at last he had nothing left to buy drink with; ill, helpless, without a crust of bread, he took refuge in some unheated, abandoned shed. Some of his former pupils, clever and witty ones whom he had always suspected of disobedience and impudent behaviour, hearing of his pitiful plight, got up a subscription for his benefit, even selling many things they needed to do so; only one, Pavlushka Tchitchikov, refused on the ground of lack of means, and only offered a five kopeck piece, which his schoolfellows at once flung back at him: "Ough, you screw!" The poor teacher hid his face in his hands, when he heard what his old pupils had done, tears gushed from his faded eyes, as though he were a helpless child. "The Lord has made me weep on the brink

of the grave," he murmured in a feeble voice; and he heaved a bitter sigh when he heard about Tchitchikov, adding: "Ah, Pavlushka! how people change! Why, what a well-behaved boy he was! Nothing unruly in him—soft as silk! I have been deceived in him, dreadfully deceived. . . ."

It cannot be said, however, that our hero was naturally hard and callous, or that his feelings were so blunted that he knew neither pity nor compassion. He was capable of feeling both; he would even have liked to help so long as no considerable sum was involved, so long as he had not to touch the money which he had determined not to touch; in short his father's admonition, "Be careful and save money," was bearing fruit, but he had no great love of money for its own sake: he was not governed by meanness and miserliness. No, those were not the motives that actuated him; he had a vision of a future of ease and comfort with enough of everything; carriages, a well-built house, good dinners—these were the ideals continually floating in his mind. It was to make sure of enjoying all this some day in the future, that the kopecks were saved, and for a time stingily denied himself and to others. When a rich man dashed by him in a light elegant droshky drawn by richly-harnessed trotting horses, he would stand still as though rooted to the spot, and then as though waking from a long sleep, would say: "Why, he was a counting-house clerk and wore his hair cut like a peasant's!" And everything suggestive of wealth and prosperity made an impression upon him that he could not himself explain. On leaving school he did not even want to take a holiday, so strong was his desire to set to work at once and get into the service. In spite, however, of

his high testimonials, it was with great difficulty that he succeeded in getting a berth in the Palace of Justice; even in the remotest corners powerful patronage is just as necessary! The job he obtained was a wretched one, the salary a miserable thirty or forty roubles a year. But he resolved to set to work zealously, to conquer and overcome all difficulties. And, indeed, he displayed incredible self-sacrifice, patience and self-denial. From early morning till late in the evening, without flagging spiritually or physically, he was up to the ears in official papers. He did not go home, but slept at the office on the tables, had dinner sometimes with the porters, and with all that, succeeded in preserving his neat exterior, in dressing decently, in retaining an agreeable expression on his face, and even something of dignity in his movements. It must be said that the officials of the Palace of Justice were distinguished by their ugliness and unprepossessing appearance. Some had faces that looked like badly-baked bread, with a cheek swollen out on one side, and the chin bent in the other direction, with a pimple on the upper lip, which was cracked, moreover—in fact they were anything but pretty. They all spoke gruffly in a voice that sounded as if they were just going to hit some one; they frequently sacrificed to Bacchus, so proving that there are many relics of paganism left in the Slavonic nature; they used even to come to the office sometimes the worse for liquor, as it is called, which made things very unpleasant and the air anything but fragrant. Tchitchikov, who was a complete contrast to them both in his looks, in the affableness of his voice and in his complete abstinence from strong drink, could not but be conspicuous and distinguished among such clerks. But, for all that, his progress

was difficult. He was under the authority of a very old head clerk, who was the very incarnation of stony callousness and insensibility: everlastingly the same, unapproachable, he had never in his life displayed a trace of a smile on his face, he had never greeted any one even with an inquiry after his health. No one had ever seen him different from what he always was, either in the street, or at home. If only he had shown an interest in anything; if only he had got drunk and laughed in his cups; or if he had given himself up to the savage merriment of a drunken robber, but there was not a shadow of anything of the sort. There was absolutely nothing in him; neither wickedness nor goodness, and there was something terrible about this absence of anything. His coarsely marble-like face, free from any striking irregularity, did not suggest resemblance to anything; there was a morose harmony between his features. Only the pockmarks with which his face was pitted classified it with those faces on which, to use the popular expression, the devil has threshed peas at night. It seemed as though it were beyond human power to make up to this man and win his favour, but Tchitchikov made the attempt. At first he set to work to please him in all sorts of imperceptible trifles; he carefully considered the way he mended the pens with which he wrote, and preparing several on the same pattern, always put them ready to his hand; he blew or brushed away the sand and tobacco from his table, and brought a new rag to clean his inkstand; he looked for and found his hat, as wretched a hat as ever was seen in the world, and always laid it beside him before closing time; he brushed the back of the old man's coat if he chanced to rub against the whitewashed wall. But it remained absolutely unnoticed, exactly as

though nothing had been done. At last he sniffed out something about his private life: he found out that he had a rather mature daughter whose face also looked as if the devil had threshed peas on it. He determined to make his attack on that side. He found out what church she went to on Sundays, and made a practice of standing just opposite her, neatly dressed, with a stiffly starched shirt-front. This strategy was crowned with success: the morose head clerk was shaken and invited him to tea! And before the clerks in the office had time to look round things had gone so far that Tchitchikov had moved into the old man's house, had become useful and indispensable to him, bought the flour and the sugar for the household, behaved to the daughter as though they were engaged, called the head clerk papa and kissed his hand. Every one in the office assumed that at the end of February, before Lent, there would be a wedding. The morose old head clerk even began trying to promote his interests with the higher powers, and in a short time Tchitchikov was himself appointed to a post as head clerk, which had just fallen vacant. This, it seemed, was the chief object of his connection with the old clerk, for the next day Tchitchikov secretly removed his trunk, and the following morning departed to another lodging. He left off calling the old head clerk papa, and never kissed his hand again, and the question of marriage dropped, as though it had never been thought of. Whenever he met the old man, however, he shook hands with him affably and invited him to tea, so that, in spite of the old clerk's invariable stoniness and gruff indifference, he always shook his head and muttered to himself: "You took me in, you took me in, you limb of Satan!"

This was the hardest stage in his upward journey.

From that time forward, his advance was easier and more successful. He became a marked man. He turned out to possess everything necessary in that world: agreeable manners and deportment and briskness in business matters. With these qualifications, he succeeded within a short time in obtaining what is called a lucrative post and made the fullest possible use of it. It must be understood that just at that time very strict measures were being taken against bribes of all sorts. He was not afraid of these measures, but turned them to his own advantage, displaying that typical Russian resourcefulness that only comes to the surface in times of stress. The way things were managed was this: as soon as a petitioner came forward and thrust his hand into his pocket in order to extract therefrom the familiar letters of recommendation signed by Prince Hovansky, as the expression is among us in Russia—"No, no," he would say with a smile, stopping the petitioner's hand, "do you imagine that I . . . no, no! this is our duty, the work we are bound to do without any recompense! As far as that goes you may rest assured: everything will be done by to-morrow. Allow me to know your address, there is no need for you to trouble yourself, it shall be brought to your house."

The delighted petitioner would return home almost ecstatic, thinking: "Well, at last here's the sort of man we want more of! He's a precious jewel!" But the petitioner would wait one day, a second, the papers are not brought to the house; nor are they on the third day. He goes to the office—the business has not been touched—he applies to the precious jewel. "Oh, I beg your pardon," says Tchitchikov, taking both his hands. "We have had such a lot of work, but by to-

morrow it shall be done, by to-morrow without fail! I really feel quite ashamed." And all this is accompanied by the most fascinating manners. If meanwhile the skirts of a coat fly open a hand is instantly trying to set things right and hold the skirt. But neither the next day, the day after, or the day after that are the papers brought to the house. The petitioner begins to put two and two together: "Why, hang it all, what's at the bottom of it?" He makes inquiries and is told: "You have to give something to the copying clerks." "Why not! I am ready to give a quarter of a rouble or two." "No, not a quarter, but a twenty-five rouble note." "Twenty-five roubles to the copying clerks!" the petitioner cries out. "Yes, why are you so excited," he is answered, "it's divided like this: the copying clerks get a quarter rouble each, and the rest goes to the heads." The slow-witted petitioner slaps himself on the forehead and swears for all he is worth at the new order of things, at the suppression of bribes, and the courteous refined manners of the officials. "In old days one did know what to do anyway: one brought the chief man ten roubles and the thing was done, and now they must have twenty-five roubles, and you have to wait a week before you guess what to do . . . the devil take all this disinterested honesty and official dignity!" The petitioner of course was right; but on the other hand, now there are no bribe-takers, all our higher officials are most honest and gentlemanly people, only the secretaries and copying clerks are scoundrels.

Soon a much wider field presented itself to Tchitchikov. A committee was formed to superintend the erection of a very expensive government building. He succeeded in getting on the committee, and became one of

its most active members. The committee immediately set to work. They were busy over the building for six years, but either the climate hindered its progress, or the building materials were peculiar in some way, for the government building got no higher than the foundation. Meanwhile a handsome private residence made its appearance at the other end of the town for each member of the committee: apparently the character of the soil was more favourable there. The members of the committee began to grow prosperous and to rear families. It was only at this point that Tchitchikov began to relax a little the severity of his rules of abstinence and self-denial. Only now his long drawn-out fast was a little mitigated, and it appeared that he had by no means an aversion for various enjoyments which he had succeeded in denying himself in those years of ardent youth, when hardly any man is completely master of himself. Some superfluities made their appearance: he engaged a rather good cook, procured fine linen shirts. Already he had bought himself cloth such as no one in the province wore, and from that time forth took to wearing by preference clothes of a shot-brown or shot-reddish hue; already he obtained a fine pair of horses and held one rein himself, making the trace horse turn his head to one side: he had already adopted the habit of sponging himself over with water mixed with eau-de-Cologne; already he had bought a special very expensive soap to preserve his complexion, already . . .

But all at once a new chief, a stern military man, the enemy of bribe-takers and of everything that is called injustice, was sent to replace the easy-going old fogey who had been in command. The next day he frightened every one of them, he called for accounts,

detected inaccuracies and sums of money missing at every step, instantly noticed the handsome private residences and a severe inquiry followed. Officials were dismissed from their posts. The handsome private residences passed to the Treasury and were transformed into almshouses and schools for the sons of soldiers—everything was scattered to the winds and Tchitchikov suffered more than the others. The new chief suddenly—God only knows why, sometimes indeed it happens for no reason—took a dislike to his face in spite of its pleasantness, and conceived a mortal hatred for him. And the relentless chief was a terrible menace to every one. But as he was a military man and so did not understand all the subtleties of civilian strategy, within a short time another set of officials succeeded in worming themselves into his favour, thanks to an appearance of honesty and a capacity for pleasing, and the general soon found himself in the hands of still greater scoundrels, though he did not recognise them as such; he was even delighted that he had at last picked out the right men and even boasted of his keen powers of discriminating character. The officials instantly grasped his temper and character. Everything that was under his command was carried on by men who fiercely tracked down every delinquency; everywhere, in every case, they hunted it as a fisherman hunts some fat white salmon with a harpoon, and they hunted it with such success, that in a short time every one of them had saved up several thousands of roubles. Then many of the former officials returned to the paths of righteousness and were received into the service. But Tchitchikov could not worm his way in again anyhow, though the general's chief secretary, who completely led his chief by the

nose, encouraged by Prince Hovansky's letters, espoused his cause and did his utmost, yet he could do nothing for him whatever. Though the general could be led by the nose (without being aware of it of course), yet if an idea once got into his head it was like an iron nail, there was no pulling it out again. All the intelligent secretary could obtain was the destruction of the record of his ignominy, and he only obtained this by appealing to the general's compassion, and painting in vivid colours the touching plight of the delinquent's children, though Tchitchikov fortunately had none.

"Well!" said Tchitchikov to himself, "I hooked a good thing, I was pulling it out when the line broke—don't keep on worrying. It's no good crying over spilt milk, I must set to work." And so he made up his mind to begin his career once more, once more to arm himself with patience, once more to deny himself everything although he had so greatly enjoyed his slackness just before. He had to move to another town, there to make himself a position again. Nothing he attempted succeeded. He had to pass from one job to another and then to a third in a very short time. The jobs were humble and degrading. It must be understood that Tchitchikov was one of the most refined men that ever existed on this earth. Though he had at first to rub along in coarse society, he always maintained his inward refinement; he liked the table in the office to be of polished wood, and everything to be on a gentlemanly scale; he never permitted himself an unrefined word and was always offended if he saw a lack of proper respect for rank or position in the words of others. I believe it will please the reader to hear that he changed his linen every alter-

nate day, and in the heat of summer every day; the slightest offensive smell annoyed him, for this reason he always put cloves in his nose when Petrushka came to undress him and pull off his boots; and in many cases his nerves were as delicate as a girl's, and so it was hard to find himself again in those grades in which everything smelt of brandy and indecorum. However much he hardened his heart, he grew thin and even greenish in the face during this time of hardship. He had been beginning to grow plump and to develop those seemly rounded contours with which the reader found him when he met him last, and already when he looked in the looking-glass he had begun to meditate on many agreeable things—a wife and a nursery—and a smile followed such thoughts; but now when he glanced at some unlucky moment into the looking-glass he could not help crying out: "Holy Mother! how disgusting I have grown!" And for a long while afterwards he would not look at himself. But our hero endured it all, endured it with fortitude, endured it with patience, and—at last succeeded in getting into the Customs Office. It must be said that this department had long been the secret subject of his reveries. He saw what stylish foreign articles the customs house officials possessed, what pieces of china and of fine cambric they sent to their lady friends, aunts and sisters. More than once he said with a sigh: "That's what one ought to get into: the frontier is near, and enlightened people, and what fine linen shirts one can get hold of!"

I must mention that another thing he used to dream of was a special sort of French soap which imparted an extraordinary whiteness to the skin and freshness to the complexion; what it was called, God only knows,

but he imagined he would certainly come upon it at the frontier. And so he had for years been longing to get into the customs department, but he had been restrained by the various advantages connected with the building committee, and he justly argued that the customs was far away and that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush. Now he determined at all costs to get into the customs—and he got into the customs. He attacked his duties with extraordinary zeal. It seemed as though fate itself had marked him out to be a customs house official. Such promptitude, penetration, and sharpsightedness had never before been seen or even heard of. In three or four weeks he had become so completely at home in the work that he knew absolutely everything about it. He did not even weigh or measure but found out from the invoice how many yards of cloth or other material there was in the piece; lifting a parcel in his hand he could tell at once how many pounds it weighed. As for searches, in that, as his colleagues expressed it, he simply had the scent of a hound; one could not but be amazed at the patience with which he felt every button, and all this was done with killing *sang-froid* and incredible courtesy. And while the victims were furious and beside themselves with anger, conscious of a malignant impulse to slap his suave countenance, he would only say, without the slightest change in his face or his courteous manners: "May I trouble you to be so kind as to stand up?": or, "Will you kindly walk into the other room, madam, there the wife of one of our clerks will interview you?": or, "Allow me to unpick the lining of your coat with my penknife," and saying this he would extract from within the lining shawls and kerchiefs, as coolly as though he were taking them out of his own

trunk. Even his superiors declared that he was not a man but a fiend: he found contraband goods in wheels and shafts of carriages and the ears of horses, and in all kinds of places in which it would never occur to the author to peep, and into which no one but a customs house official would venture to peep, so that the unfortunate traveller after crossing the frontier could not recover for quite a long time, and as he mopped up the beads of perspiration that came out all over him, could only cross himself and say: "Well, well!" The victim's position was very much like that of a schoolboy who has escaped from a private room, to which he has been summoned by a master to receive a lecture, instead of which he has quite unexpectedly received a thrashing. For a brief period there was no peace for the smugglers of contraband goods. He was the menace and despair of all the Polish Jews. Nothing could overcome his honesty and incorruptibility, they were almost unnatural. He did not even amass a small fortune from the confiscated goods and various articles which instead of being passed on to the Treasury, were retained to avoid unnecessary correspondence. Such zealous, disinterested service could not but be the subject of general admiration, and was bound in the end to attract the attention of the authorities. He was promoted, and immediately drew up a scheme for catching all smugglers, only asking for the means of carrying it out himself. He was immediately entrusted with the commission and unlimited authority to conduct searches. This was all that he wanted. Just at that time a regularly organised society of smugglers was formed. The audacious enterprise gave promise of a profit of millions. Tchitchikov had long been aware of its existence and refused the offers

of an emissary sent to bribe him, saying drily: "It's not time for that yet." When he had received full control he sent word to the society saying: "The time has come now." His calculation was only too correct. Now he could gain in one year what he could not have made by twenty years of the most zealous service. He had not before been willing to enter into relations with them because he had been nothing but a humble pawn and so could not have got much; but now . . . now it was quite a different matter: he could make any terms he liked. That the thing might go through without hindrance he brought into it another man, a colleague of his, who could not resist temptation although his hair was grey. The terms were fixed and the society set to work. The enterprise began brilliantly. The reader has no doubt often heard the story of the clever journey of the Spanish sheep who, crossing the frontier in two sheep-skins, carried over Brabant lace to the value of millions of roubles under their fleeces. This incident took place at the time when Tchitchikov was in the customs. Had he not had a hand in this enterprise no Jews in the world could have succeeded in carrying out such an undertaking. After three or four flocks of sheep had crossed the frontier the two customs house officials found themselves in possession of a capital of four hundred thousand roubles. Tchitchikov is said to have made five hundred thousand because he was a little sharper. Goodness knows to what immense figure their gains might have swelled, had not an unlucky chance in an evil hour ruined everything. The devil confounded the two officials. To speak plainly the officials lost their temper and quarrelled about nothing. In some heated conversation, possibly after too much to

drink, Tchitchikov called his colleague a priest's son, and, though he really was a priest's son, the latter, why I cannot say, was bitterly offended and answered him at once forcibly and extremely cuttingly in these words: "That's a lie, I'm a civil councillor and not a priest's son, but you are a priest's son," and added to annoy him further: "so that's all about it." Though he did score off him in this way, throwing the offensive epithet back at him, and though the expression, "So that's all about it!" may have been a strong one, he was not satisfied with that, he gave secret information against him. Though indeed they do say that they were at loggerheads already over some woman as fresh and firm as a juicy turnip, to use the expression of the customs officials, that men had even been bribed to waylay our hero some evening in a dark alley and beat him within an inch of his life, but that she made fools of both the officials and really bestowed her favours on a staff-captain, called Shamsharev. How it really was, God only knows; the reader who cares to may complete the story for himself. The chief point is that their secret relations with the smugglers were discovered. Though the civil councillor was himself ruined, he certainly brought his colleague to grief also. The officials were brought to justice, an inventory was made of everything they had and all was confiscated, and all this fell like a thunderbolt on their heads. They came to themselves as after delirium, and saw with horror what they had done. The civil councillor had not the fortitude to endure his fate and perished in obscurity, but the collegiate councillor faced his troubles bravely. He succeeded in concealing part of the money in spite of the keen scent of the officials who were tracking him; he brought into

play all the subtle wiles of a brain of much experience and deep understanding of men; with one he tried his agreeable address, with another pathetic appeal, with one he employed flattery, which never comes amiss, into another's hands he slipped money, in short he managed things so far successfully at least, as to get off with less ignominy than his colleague, and to escape trial on a criminal charge. But both his fortune and all his foreign treasures were lost: other amateurs of such things turned up to secure them. All he managed to keep was a paltry ten thousand, carefully put away for a rainy day, two dozen linen shirts, a small chaise such as bachelor gentlemen drive about in, and two serfs, the coachman Selifan and the footman Petrushka; and the customs house officials, moved by genuine sympathy, left him five or six pieces of soap for preserving the freshness of the complexion—that was all! This was the position in which our hero found himself again! Such was the immensity of the catastrophe that overtook him. This was what he called suffering in a good cause. It might have been expected that after such storms, such trials, such fluctuations of destiny and troubles in life, he would retire with his precious ten thousand to the peaceful seclusion of some little district town and there vegetate for ever in a chintz dressing-gown at the window of a little low-pitched house, watching on Sundays the peasants fighting under his window, or for fresh air and exercise walking into the poultry yard to feel with his own hands the hen destined for soup, and so lead an inglorious but not altogether useless existence. But this did not happen. One must do justice to the invincible strength of his character. After misfortunes that were enough if not to kill, at

least to cool and subdue a man for ever, his indomitable passion was not quenched. He was plunged in grief and vexation, he murmured against the whole world, was wroth with the injustice of destiny, indignant at the injustice of men, and yet he could not resign himself to abandoning all effort. In short, he displayed a patience compared with which the wooden patience of a German, due to the sluggish, languid circulation of his blood, is nothing. Tchitchikov's blood on the other hand circulated vigorously, and he needed a great deal of good sense and strong will to keep a tight rein on all the impulses that were longing to break bounds and enjoy themselves in freedom. He argued, and there was some justice in the argument, "Why me? Why should misfortune have overtaken me? Who wastes his time in the service nowadays? They all make what they can. I have never brought trouble on any one: I haven't robbed the widow, I have reduced no one to beggary; I have made use of what was to spare; I took where any one would have taken; if I had not made use of it, others would have. Why are other people prosperous and why should I be crushed like a worm? And what am I now? What use am I? How can I look any respectable father of a family in the face? How can I help feeling stings of conscience when I know that I am a useless burden on the earth? And what will my children say one day? 'Our father is a beast,' they will say, 'he has left us no property!' "

As the reader is already aware, Tchitchikov was much troubled about his descendants. It was such a touching subject! He would not have set to work so vigorously if it had not been for the question, which for some unknown reason spontaneously occurred to

him: "What will my children say?" And so our future founder of a family was like a cautious tomcat who, looking out of the corner of one eye to see whether his master is watching him from somewhere, hurriedly grabs whatever is nearest to him: soap, candles, salt pork, or a canary if he can get it in his claws, in fact, lets nothing escape him. So our hero wept and lamented, but meanwhile his active brain did not flag; there everything was longing to build up something and only waiting for a plan. Once more he drew himself in, once more he began to lead a hard life, once more restricted himself in every way, once more from an elegant decorous existence sank into degradation and low life. And while waiting for better times he was even obliged to adopt the calling of a legal agent, a calling which is not recognised as creditable among us, he was jostled out of the way on all sides, treated with scant respect by all the small fry of the attorneys' offices, and even by those who employed him, doomed to cool his heels hanging about in entries, to put up with rudeness and so on, but poverty forced him to accept anything. Among the jobs he got was one to arrange for the mortgaging of several hundred of peasants to the Trustee Committee. The estate on which they existed was hopelessly ruined. It had been ruined by the cattle plague, rascally stewards, bad harvests, infectious diseases, which carried off the best of the workmen, and lastly the folly of the landowner himself, who had furnished a house for himself in Moscow in the latest fashion, and wasted upon this the whole of his property to the last kopeck, so that he had literally nothing to eat. At last the only thing left to do was to mortgage his last remaining estate. Mortgaging to the govern-

ment was at that time a new scheme and people resorted to it with some uneasiness. Tchitchikov acting as agent, after first propitiating every one (as we all know, without a preliminary consideration no one can obtain a simple piece of information or verification, at least a bottle of Madeira must be poured down every throat) and so after propitiating every one concerned, he pointed out one circumstance—that half the peasants had died—in order that there might be no difficulties made afterwards. . . . "But they are all on the census list, aren't they?" said the secretary. "They are," answered Tchitchikov. "Well, why are you troubled about them? One dies, another's born, and all are just as good to pawn." The secretary, as the reader perceives, could talk in rhyme. And meanwhile the most brilliant inspiration that ever entered the mind of man suddenly dawned upon Tchitchikov. "Ough, I am a Simple Simon," he said to himself: "I look for my gloves and they are both in my belt! Why, suppose I buy all who are dead, before the new census lists are sent out, if I get, let us say, a thousand of them, and suppose the Trustee Committee gives me two hundred roubles a soul: why there's a fortune of two hundred thousand! And now is a good time, there has just been an epidemic, the peasants have died, thank goodness, in great numbers. The owners have been losing at cards, carousing and squandering their money most appropriately; they are running to Petersburg to go into the service, their estates are deserted and managed anyhow, and it is more and more difficult every year to pay the taxes. So every one will be delighted to let me have them if only to escape paying the tax on them; and perhaps in some cases I may get a kopeck for taking them.

Of course it is a difficult and troublesome business, and there is a danger of getting into trouble again, of some scandal arising. Well, but man has been given a brain to make use of it. And the best of it is that the project will seem incredible to every one, no one will believe in it; it is true that one cannot buy peasants without land, nor mortgage them either. But I will buy them for resettlement; nowadays you can get land in the Taurida or Kherson provinces for nothing if only you settle peasants on them. And that is where I will settle them all! To Kherson with them! Let them live there! The resettlement can be done properly, in the legal way through the courts. If they want to verify the peasants —by all means, I have nothing against it. Why not? I'll present the verification with a signature of the captain of the police in his own handwriting. The village might be called Tchitchikov's Settlement or from my Christian name, the hamlet of Pavlovskoe."

And so this was how our hero's mind reached this strange idea, for which I cannot tell whether my readers will be grateful to him, though it would be hard to say how grateful the author is, for had this idea not entered Tchitchikov's head, this poem would not, in any case, have seen the light.

Crossing himself after the Russian fashion he proceeded to carry it out. On the pretence of looking for a place to settle and other pretexts, he went off to look at various corners of our empire, especially those which had suffered more than others from various misfortunes, such as bad harvests, high rate of mortality and so on, where in fact he might most conveniently and cheaply buy the sort of peasants he wanted. He did

not apply to every landowner indiscriminately, but selected those who were most to his taste, or those with whom he found less difficulty in making such bargains, trying first to make their acquaintance and gain their good-will, so as to obtain the peasants through friendship rather than by purchase. And so the reader must not be indignant with the author if the characters who have hitherto appeared are not to his taste, that is Tchitchikov's fault; here he is completely master and where he thinks fit to take us there we must go. If, however, we do incur censure for the colourlessness and unattractiveness of our characters, we will only say for ourselves that the full scope and magnitude of anything is not to be seen at first. The approach to any town whatever, even to the capital, is always dull and uninteresting; at first everything is grey and monotonous; there are endless strings of smoke-begrimed factories and workshops, and only afterwards the corners of six-storied houses, shops, signboards, great vistas of streets begin to appear, all with belfrys, columns, statues, and turrets, with the splendour, noise and uproar of the town, and everything that the brain and hand of man has so marvellously devised.

How his first purchase took place my readers have seen already. They will see later how things go afterwards, what successes and failures our hero meets with, how he has to overcome more difficult obstacles, how titanic forms appear, how the hidden springs of our great novel move as its horizon spreads wide in the distance, and it takes a grand lyrical direction. The travelling party, consisting of a middle-aged gentleman, a chaise such as bachelors drive in, the valet

Petrushka, the coachman Selifan, and the three horses already known to the reader, from the Assessor to the rascally dappled grey, have a long way still to go.

And so here we have the full-length portrait of our hero, just as he was! But perhaps the reader will insist on a definite answer in regard to one particular: what sort of man was he as regards moral qualities? That he was not a hero filled with virtues and perfections is evident. What was he then? He must have been a scoundrel, I suppose. Why a scoundrel? Why be so severe to others? There are no scoundrels among us nowadays: there are well-intentioned, agreeable people, but you will scarcely find above two or three men who would risk the public ignominy of a slap in the face, and even those talk about virtue nowadays. It would be more just to call him a good manager, a man bent on making money. Making money is the universal vice: things have been done which the world describes as not very honest for the sake of it. It is true that there is something repellent in such a character, and the very readers who on their way through life would make friends with such a man, would entertain him in their house and spend their time agreeably with him, will look at him askance if he is made the hero of a drama or a poem. But wise is he who does not disdain any character, but probing it with searching eye investigates its primary elements. Everything is rapidly transformed in a man; before you have time to look round, a terrible worm has grown up within him and is sucking all his vital sap. And more than once some passion—not merely a great passion, but some insignificant little propensity for something petty—has sprung up in a man born for better things, has

made him forget great and sacred duties and see something great and holy in insignificant baubles. Innumerable as the sands of the sea are the passions of man and all are different, and all, base and noble alike, are first under a man's control, and afterwards cruel tyrants dominating him. Blessed is the man who has chosen from among them a noble passion: it grows and with every hour and minute increases his immense happiness, and he enters further and further into the infinite paradise of his soul. But there are passions, the choice of which lies not in a man's hands. They are born with him at the moment of his birth into the world, and he has not been given the strength to turn away from them. They work upon some higher plan, and there is in them something that for ever calls to one and is never silent all one's life. They are destined to complete the grand pageant of the earth, whether they appear in gloomy, sinister form, or as a bright apparition that rejoices the world—they are equally called up for some good unknown to man. And maybe in this very Tchitchikov, the passion that led him on was not due to him, and in his cold existence there lies hidden what will one day reduce a man to ashes and to his knees before the wisdom of the heavens. And it is another mystery why this type has appeared in the poem that is now seeing the light.

But what weighs upon me is not that my readers will be displeased with my hero. What weighs upon me is the conviction which nothing can shake in my soul, that my readers would have been delighted with the same hero, this same Tchitchikov, if the author had not looked too deeply into his soul, had not stirred up in its depths what slips away and hides from the light,

had not displayed the most secret thoughts which a man does not trust to any other, but had shown him such as he appeared to all the town, to Manilov and others; then every one would have been delighted with him, and would have welcomed him as an interesting man: It would not have mattered that neither his face nor his whole figure would have moved as though living before their eyes; on the other hand, when they had finished the book, their souls would have been untroubled and they could go back to the card table, which is the solace of all Russia. Yes, my gentle readers, you would rather not see the poverty of human nature exposed. "What for?" you say; "what is the use of it? Do you suppose we don't know that there is a great deal that is stupid and contemptible in life? We often have to see what is by no means cheering, apart from you. You had better show us what is noble and attractive. Better let us forget."

"Why do you tell me that my estate is in a bad way, my lad?" says the landowner to his steward, "I know that, my dear fellow, without your telling me; have you nothing better than that to say? Let me forget it; let me not know it, then I shall be happy." And so the money which might to some extent have saved the situation is wasted on all sorts of ways of inducing forgetfulness. The mind from which, perhaps, great resources might have sprung sleeps; and the estate is knocked down at auction and the owner is cast adrift to forget his troubles with his soul ready in his extremity for base deeds at which he would once have been horrified.

The author will incur censure also from the so-called patriots who as a rule sit quietly at home and busy

themselves about quite other matters, making money, making their fortunes at the expense of others; but as soon as anything happens which they regard as insulting to their country, if a book appears in which some bitter truth is told, they run out of every corner like spiders, when they see a fly caught in their web, and immediately raise outcries: "Is it right to bring such a thing to light, to proclaim it aloud? Why, all the things that are described here are our private affairs—is it right? What will foreigners say? Is it pleasant to hear a low opinion of oneself? Do they imagine that it isn't painful? Do they imagine that we are not patriots?" I must confess that I cannot find a fitting answer to these sage observations, especially the one concerning the opinion of foreigners. Unless perhaps this. Two citizens lived in a remote corner of Russia. One whose name was Kifa Mokievitch was the father of a family, and a man of mild disposition, who passed his life in a dressing-gown and slippers; he did not trouble his head about his family; his time was devoted rather to speculative inquiries and engrossed with the following philosophical—as he called it—questions: "Now for instance the animal is born naked," he would say as he walked up and down the room. "Why is it that he is naked? Why isn't he born like a bird: why isn't he hatched out of an egg? It really is . . . er. . . . The more you look into nature the harder it is to understand! . . ." Such were the meditations of the worthy citizen Kifa Mokievitch. But that is not what matters. The other citizen was Moky Kifovitch, his son. He was what is called in Russia a *bogatyr*, and while his father was absorbed in the question of the problem of the birth of animals,

this muscular young man of twenty craved for self-expression. He could not do anything by halves: somebody's arm was always broken or somebody else had a bump on his nose. Every one in the house or the neighbourhood—from the serf girl to the yard dog—fled at the sight of him: he even smashed his own bedstead into fragments. Such was Moky Kifovitch, but yet he had a kind heart. But that is not the point either. The point really is this: "Mercy on us, kind sir, Kifa Mokievitch," said all the servants of his own and the neighbouring households to his father, "your Moky Kifovitch is too much for us. Nobody has any peace for him, he is such a pestering fellow!" "Yes, he is mischievous, he is mischievous," his father usually replied: "but there, what's to be done? It's too late to knock him about, besides every one would blame me for cruelty; and he is sensitive; reproach him before two or three other people, he'll be meek, but then the publicity! That is what is so dreadful! All the town would be calling him a cur. Do you really imagine that would not be painful—am I not his father? Because I am absorbed in philosophy and have not time to attend to my family, do you suppose I am not a father? No, indeed, I am his father! his father, hang it all, his father. Moky Kifovitch is very near and dear to me!" At this point Kifa Mokievitch smote himself on the chest with his fist and became greatly excited. "If he is to remain a cur, don't let people learn it from me, don't let me give him away!" And having thus displayed his paternal sentiments, he left Moky Kifovitch to persevere in his heroic exploits and returned again to his favourite subject, asking himself some such question as: "Well, if an elephant were hatched out of an egg I expect the shell would be pretty

thick, you wouldn't break it with a cannon ball, they would have to invent some new explosive." So thus they went on living, these two citizens who have so unexpectedly peeped out of their quiet retirement as out of a window into the end of our poem, in order to furnish a modest answer to the censures of some ardent patriots who have hitherto been quietly engaged in philosophical pursuits or in increasing their fortunes at the expense of the finances of the country they love so dearly, not caring about avoiding wrong-doing, but very anxious that people should not talk of their wrong-doings. But no, not patriotism, nor genuine feeling is at the root of their censure. Another feeling lies concealed under it. Why hide the truth? Who if not an author is bound to speak the holy truth? You are afraid of any one's looking deeply below the surface, you dread looking below the surface yourselves, you like to glide over everything with heedless eyes. You even laugh heartily at Tchitchikov, perhaps you will even praise the author—and will say: "He has neatly hit it off, though, he must be an amusing fellow!" And after saying that you look at yourself with redoubled pride, a self-satisfied smile comes on to your face and you add: "There is no denying that there are very queer and funny people in some provinces and thorough rogues too!" And which of you, full of Christian meekness, not in public, but alone in private, at the moment of solitary inward converse, asks in the depths of your own soul, this painful question: "Is there not a bit of Tchitchikov in me too?" And it is pretty sure to be so indeed! And if some friend, not of too low or too high a grade in the service, should chance to pass by at that moment, you will immediately nudge your neighbour and will say almost guffawing: "Look, look,

there goes Tchitchikov, there's Tchitchikov!" And then like a child, forgetting all decorum befitting your age and position, you will run behind him, mimicking and repeating: "Tchitchikov! Tchitchikov! Tchitchikov!"

But we have begun talking too loudly, forgetting that our hero who was asleep all the while we have been telling his story, is by now awake and might easily hear his name so frequently repeated. He easily takes offence, and will be annoyed if any one speaks disrespectfully about him. It is no great matter to the reader whether Tchitchikov is angry with him or not, but an author ought never under any circumstances to fall out with his hero—they have still to go a long way hand in hand together; two long parts are to come, that is no trifling matter.

"Hey, hey! What are you about?" said Tchitchikov to Selifan.

"What's the matter?" said Selifan in a deliberate voice.

"What's the matter indeed, are you a goose! How are you driving? Come, get on!"

And, indeed, Selifan had for a long time been driving with closed eyes, only occasionally shaking the reins about the sides of the horses who were also dozing; and Petrushka's cap had fallen off long ago, and he had sunk back with his head poking Tchitchikov's legs so that the latter was obliged to give him a nudge. Selifan pulled himself together, and giving the dappled grey a few switches on the back, after which the latter fell into a trot, and flourishing the whip over them all, cried in a thin sing-song voice: "Never fear." The horses bestirred themselves and carried the chaise along as though it were as light as a feather.

Selifan brandished the whip and kept shouting, "Ech! ech! ech!" smoothly rising up and down on the box, as the three horses darted up or flew like the wind down the little hills which dotted the high road that sloped scarcely perceptibly down hill. Tchitchikov merely smiled as he lightly swayed on his leather cushion, for he loved rapid driving. And what Russian does not love rapid driving? How should his soul that craves to be lost in a whirl, to carouse without stint, to say at times, "Damnation take it all!"—how should his soul not love it? How not love it when there is a feeling in it of something ecstatic and marvellous? One fancies an unseen force has caught one up on its wing and one flies oneself, and everything flies too: milestones fly by, merchants on the front seats of their tilt-carts fly to meet one, the forest flies by on both sides with dark rows of firs and pines, with the ring of the axe and caw of the crows; the whole road flies into the unknown retreating distance; and there is something terrible in this rapid flitting by, in which there is no time to distinguish the vanishing object and only the sky over one's head and the light clouds and the moon that struggles through them seem motionless. Ah! troika, bird of a troika! Who was it first thought of thee? Sure, thou couldst only have been born among a spirited people,—in that land that does not care to do things by halves, but has spread, a vast plain, over half the world, and one may count its milestones till one's eyes are dizzy! And there is nothing elaborate, one would think, about thy construction; it is not held together by iron screws—no, a deft Yaroslav peasant fitted thee up and put thee together, hastily, roughly, with nothing but axe and drill. The driver wears no German top boots: he has

a beard and gauntlets, and sits upon goodness knows what; but when he stands up and swings his whip and sets up a song—the horses fly like a whirlwind, the spokes of the wheels are blended into one revolving disc, the road quivers, and the pedestrian cries out, halting in alarm—and the troika dashes away and away! . . . And already all that can be seen in the distance is something flinging up the dust and whirling through the air.

And, Russia, art not thou too flying onwards like a spirited troika that nothing can overtake? The road is smoking under thee, the bridges rumble, everything falls back and is left behind! The spectator stands still struck dumb by the divine miracle: is it not a flash of lightning from heaven? What is the meaning of this terrifying onrush? What mysterious force is hidden in this troika, never seen before? Ah, horses, horses—what horses! Is the whirlwind hidden under your manes? Is there some delicate sense tingling in every vein? They hear the familiar song over their heads—at once in unison they strain their iron chests and scarcely touching the earth with their hoofs are transformed almost into straight lines flying through the air—and the troika rushes on, full of divine inspiration. . . . Russia, whither flyest thou? Answer! She gives no answer. The ringing of the bells melts into music; the air, torn to shreds, whirs and rushes like the wind, everything there is on earth is flying by, and the other states and nations, with looks askance, make way for her and draw aside.

BOOK TWO

CHAPTERS I TO V

CHAPTER I

WHY depict the poverty of our life and our melancholy imperfection, digging people out from the wilds, from the most secluded corners of the empire? What is to be done, if such is the character of the author; if he is so sick at heart over his own imperfection, and if his talent is formed to depict the poverty of our life, digging people out from the wilds and the remotest corners of the empire! And here we are again in the wilderness, again we have come upon an out-of-the-way corner. But what a wilderness and what a corner!

The hills run zig-zagging for over eight hundred miles. Like the gigantic rampart of some unending fortress they rise above the plain, here a yellowish cliff like a wall with ravines and hollows, here a green, round cushion covered, as with lamb's wool, with young foliage springing from the stumps of cut-down trees, and here dark forests untouched by the axe. The river, faithful to its high banks, makes with them many a crook and turn across the whole expanse, but sometimes it escapes from them altogether into the meadows, then after taking several twists it flashes like fire in the sun, hides in a copse of birch-trees, aspens and alders, and races out of it in triumph accompanied by bridges, water mills and dams which seem to be pursuing it at every turn.

In one place the steep side of the hill rises higher than the rest, and is covered from top to bottom in the green of the thickly crowded trees. Here there is everything together, maples, pear-trees, low-growing willows, brooms, birch-trees, firs and mountain ash entwined with hops; here . . . glimpses of red roofs of farm buildings, the tops of the huts hidden behind them, the upper part of a mansion, and above all this mass of trees and roofs, an old-fashioned church lifts its five flashing cupolas. On each one of them is a carved gilt cross fastened to the cupola by carved gilt chains, so that the gold glitters in the distance as though hanging in the air unfastened to anything. And all this mass of trees and roofs together with the church are reflected upside down in the river where picturesque and misshapen old willows, some standing on the bank, others right in the water, dipping into it their branches and leaves, seem to be gazing at that reflection which they have not wearied of admiring through all the long years of their life.

It was a very fine view, but the view from the house over the plain and the distance was finer still. No guest or visitor could stand unmoved upon the balcony: there was a thrill at his heart and he could only exclaim, "My God, what a vista!" A boundless expanse lay open below. Beyond the water meadows, dotted with copses and water mills, there were green and dark-blue patches of forest, like the sea or like mist flooding the distance. Beyond the forest through the hazy atmosphere could be seen yellow sand. Beyond the sand on the distant horizon lay a ridge of chalk hills, gleaming with dazzling whiteness even in cloudy weather as though lighted up by eternal sunshine.

Dark purplish patches were faintly visible here and there upon them. These were far-away hamlets, but the eye could hardly distinguish them, only a golden church spire, flashing like a spark, betrayed the presence of a big, populous village. All this was wrapped in an unbroken stillness which even the scarcely audible notes of the feathered songsters that filled the air could not disturb. In short the visitor or guest could never stand unmoved upon the balcony, and after contemplating it for an hour or two he would exclaim again as at the first moment: "My God, what a vista!"

Who was it that lived in this village which like an invincible fortress could not be approached from the front, but could only be reached from the other side by meadows, cornfields and at last through a copse of oak-trees, dotted picturesquely on the green turf, right up to the huts and the mansion? Who was the inhabitant, the master and owner of this village? To what happy man did this secluded nook belong?

To Andrey Ivanovitch Tyentyetnikov, a landowner of the Tremalahansky district, a young unmarried man of thirty-three, by rank a collegiate secretary.

What sort of man was Andrey Ivanovitch Tyentyetnikov, what was his disposition, what were his qualities and his character?

We ought, of course, to inquire of his neighbours. A neighbour who belonged to the class of retired officers, old martinets, summed him up in the laconic expression, "A regular beast." A general, living some eight miles away, said: "The young man is not a fool, but he has too many notions in his head. I might have been of use to him because I have in Petersburg even . . ." The general did not finish his observa-

tion. The police captain remarked: "Why, his rank in the service is wretched, contemptible; and I have to go to him to-morrow for arrears of taxes!" If a peasant in the village was asked what his master was like, he made no answer. In fact the general opinion of him was rather unfavourable than favourable.

Yet Andrey Ivanovitch was neither good nor bad in his life and actions—he simply vegetated. Since there are not a few people in this world who do vegetate, why should not Tyentyetnikov vegetate?

Here, however, in a few words is a full chronicle of his day, and from it the reader may judge for himself of his character.

He woke up very late in the morning and would sit for a long time on his bed, rubbing his eyes. His eyes were unfortunately rather small and so the rubbing of them lasted a long time. All this time his man Mihailo was standing at the door with the washing basin and a towel. This poor Mihailo would stand waiting for an hour or two, then would go off to the kitchen and come back again—and his master was still sitting on the bed, rubbing his eyes. At last he got up from his bed, washed himself, put on his dressing-gown and went into the drawing-room, there to drink tea, coffee, cocoa, or even milk, sipping a little of each, crumbling up his bread in a merciless way and making a shameless mess everywhere with his tobacco ash. He would spend a couple of hours over his morning tea; and that was not all, he would take a cup of cold tea and go to the window looking out into the yard. The following scene took place every day before the window.

The unshaven butler Grigory would begin it by

bawling at Perfilyevna the housekeeper, in the following terms: "You paltry soul! You nonentity! You had better hold your tongue, you nasty woman."

"I am not going to take my orders from you, anyway, you guzzling glutton!" the nonentity, alias Perfilyevna, would shout in reply.

"Nobody could get on with you: you quarrel even with the steward, you store-room trash," bawled Grigory.

"Yes, and the steward is as great a thief as you are!" shouted the nonentity, so that she could be heard in the village. "You are both drunkards, wasting your master's substance, barrels without a bottom! You think that the master does not know you? Why, he is there, he hears it all."

"Where is the master?"

"Why, he is sitting at the window, he sees it all."

And indeed the master was sitting at the window and seeing it all.

To complete the picture, a brat whose mother had just boxed his ears, was screaming at the top of his voice, and a borzoi hound squatting on the ground whined pitifully, for the cook had just looked out of the kitchen and splashed it with scalding water; the hubbub and uproar were insufferable. Their master saw and heard it all and not till it became so unendurable that it even hindered him in doing nothing did he send to tell them to be a little quieter in their noise.

About two hours before dinner Andrey Ivanovitch went off to his study to set to work seriously, and serious his occupation certainly was. It consisted in thinking over a work which had been continually

thought over for a long time past. This work was to deal with all Russia from every point of view—civic, political, religious, philosophical, to solve the difficult questions and problems that beset her, and define clearly her great future; in short, it was a work of wide scope. But so far it had not got beyond the stage of meditation: the pen was bitten, sketches made their appearance on the paper and then it was all pushed aside; a book was taken up instead and not put down till dinner-time. The book was read with the soup, the sauce and the roast, and even with the pudding, so that some dishes got cold and others were removed untasted. Then came sipping a cup of coffee, with a pipe; then he played a game of chess with himself. What was done afterwards till supper-time it is really hard to say. I believe that simply nothing was done.

So all alone in the wide world this young man of thirty-three passed his time, sitting indoors in a dressing-gown without a cravat. He did not go out to amuse himself, he did not walk, he did not even care to go upstairs to look at the distance and the views, he did not care to open the windows to let the fresh air into the room; and the lovely view which no visitor could gaze upon without delight seemed not to exist for the owner.

From this record of his day, the reader can gather that Andrey Ivanovitch Tyentyetnikov belonged to that class of people, numerous in Russia, who are known as idlers, sluggards, lazy-bones, and so on. Whether these characters are born such or are made so by life—is still another question. I think, instead of answering it, I had better tell the story of Andrey Ivanovitch's childhood and education.

As a child he was a clever talented boy, lively and thoughtful by turns. By a lucky or unlucky chance he was sent to a school, the head master of which was a remarkable man in his way, though he had some eccentricities. Alexandr Petrovitch had the gift of divining the nature of the Russian, and knew in what language to speak to him. No boy ever left his presence downcast; on the contrary, even after the sternest reprimand he felt buoyed up and eager to efface his nasty or mischievous action. The mass of his pupils were on the surface so full of mischief, so lively and free and easy in their manners, that one might have taken them for a disorderly gang under no control, but one would have been mistaken; the authority of one man was too powerful in that gang. There was no boy, however mischievous or naughty, who would not come of himself to tell the head master of his pranks. He knew everything that was going on in their minds. His method was unusual in everything. He used to say that what was most important was to arouse ambition—he called ambition the force that urged men onwards—without which there is no moving him to activity. A great deal of mischief and wild spirits he did not restrain at all: in the pranks of childhood he saw the first stage of the development of character. They enabled him to discern what was hidden in the child, as a skilful physician looks calmly at the temporary symptoms, at rashes coming out on the body, and does not try to suppress them, but watches them intently to find out what is going on inside the patient.

His teachers were few in number: he taught most of the subjects himself, and it must be said that without

any of the pedantic terminology and sweeping theories which young professors pride themselves upon, he could in few words convey the very essence of his subject, so that it was evident even to the youngest why he needed to understand it. He used to declare that what a man needed most of all was the science of life, that in understanding that he would understand himself and know to what he ought principally to devote himself.

This science of life he made into a separate course of study to which only the most promising of his pupils were admitted. The less gifted boys he allowed to enter the government service straight from the first class, saying it was no use to worry them too much: it was enough for them if they learnt to be patient and diligent workers free from conceit and ulterior motives. "But the clever boys, the gifted boys, keep me busy a long time," he used to say, and in this last course Alexandr Petrovitch became a different man, and from the first informed them that he had hitherto expected only simple intelligence, but that now he would expect from them a higher intelligence, not the intelligence that can jeer and mock at fools, but that which can bear every insult, and suffer fools without irritation. At this stage he required from them what others require from children. That he called the highest stage of intelligence. To preserve in the midst of any troubles that lofty calm in which man ought to dwell for ever—that was what he called intelligence. In this course Alexandr Petrovitch showed that he did understand the science of life. Of subjects only those were selected for study which were calculated to turn a man into a true citizen. A great part of the lectures

consisted of descriptions of what lay before them in various careers, in the government service or in private callings. He laid before them in all their nakedness, concealing nothing, all the mortifications and obstacles which would confront a man on his path through life, all the dangers and temptations that would beset him. He knew all about them as though he himself had practised every calling and held every office. In fact he pictured anything but a joyful future. Strange to say, either because ambition had already been aroused in them, or because there was something in the very eye of that exceptional teacher that uttered the word, forward!—that marvellous word that works such miracles with the Russian—these lads actually sought positions of difficulty, thirsting for action just where action was hardest, where there was need to show a stout heart. There was a kind of sobriety in their lives. Alexandr Petrovitch put them to all sorts of proofs and tests, inflicted on them painful mortifications by his own action and also through their schoolfellows; but seeing through it they were all the more on their guard. Those who passed through the course were few in number, but those few were strong men, were like men who had been through fire. In the service they kept their footing even in the most precarious position when many others, cleverer perhaps than they, could not hold out, but gave up the service on account of the most trivial annoyances, or without being aware of it got into the hands of rogues and bribe-takers. But Alexandr Petrovitch's pupils did not merely hold on steadily but, trained in the knowledge of man and nature, exerted a lofty influence, even upon the corrupt and the depraved.

But poor Andrey Ivanovitch was not destined to enjoy this teaching. Just when he had been approved for that higher course as one of the best among the boys—there was a sudden calamity; the rare teacher, from whom one word of approval threw him into a delicious tremor, was all at once taken ill and died. Everything in the school was transformed. Alexandr Petrovitch's place was filled by a certain Fyodor Ivanovitch, a kindhearted and conscientious man whose views however were entirely different. He saw something unbridled in the free and easy manners of the pupils of the first class. He began to introduce an external discipline, insisted that the young creatures were to maintain a mute stillness, that they should never under any circumstances walk out except in twos; and even began with a yard measure fixing the distance between one pair and the next. For the sake of appearance he placed them at a table according to height instead of according to intelligence, so that the asses got all the best pieces and the clever ones all the bones. All this raised murmurings, especially when the new head master, as though intentionally slighting his predecessor, announced that a boy's intelligence and success in his studies were of no account in his eyes, that what he prized was good conduct, that if a boy were not good at his lessons, but behaved well he preferred him to the clever ones. But Fyodor Ivanovitch did not succeed in getting just what he aimed at. Mischief went on in secret, and secret mischief, as we all know, is worse than what is open; the strictest discipline was observed by day, but at night there were orgies.

In the top class everything was turned upside down.

With the best of intentions he set up all sorts of unsuitable innovations. He engaged new teachers with new ideas and points of view. They lectured in a learned way and flung a mass of new terms and expressions at their audience; they were learned and acquainted with the latest discoveries, but alas! there was no life in their teaching. It all seemed dead to listeners who had just begun to understand. Everything went wrong. But what was worst of all was that the boys lost all respect for the school authorities: they took to laughing both at the head master and at the teachers, they used to call the head master Fedka, the bun, and various other nicknames; things came to such a pass that a good many boys had to be expelled.

Andrey Ivanovitch was of a gentle disposition. He did not take part in the nightly orgies of his companions, who in spite of the strictest supervision had set up a mistress in the neighbourhood, one for eight of them, nor in their other evil courses which went as far as sacrilege and jeering at religion, just because the head master insisted upon their attending church very frequently. But he lost heart. His ambition had been stirred, but there was no activity, no career for him. It would have been better if it had never been aroused at all. He listened to the professors who grew hot in the lecture hall, and thought of his old master, who without getting hot, knew how to speak intelligibly. He heard lectures on chemistry, on the philosophy of law, and listened to the professors, as they went deeply into the subtleties of political science and the universal history of man conceived on such a vast scale that the professor only succeeded in treating of the introduction and development of guilds in some

German towns in three years; but only some shapeless scraps of all this remained in his head. Thanks to his natural good sense, he saw that this was the wrong way to teach, but what was the right way he could not tell. And he often thought of Alexander Petrovitch, and he used to be so sad that he did not know what to do for misery.

But youth has a future before it. As the time of leaving school drew nearer his heart began to throb. He said to himself: "This is not life of course, but only a preparation for life, real life is to be found in the service, there are great things to be done there." And like all ambitious youths he went to Petersburg, to which, as we all know, our ardent young men flock from all parts of Russia—to enter the service, to distinguish themselves, to gain promotion or simply to gather a smattering of our sham, colourless, icy cold "society" education. Andrey Ivanovitch's ambitious yearnings were, however, dampened at the outset by his uncle Onufry Ivanovitch, an actual civil councillor. He informed him that the only thing that mattered was a good handwriting, that without that there was no becoming a minister or statesman, while Tyentyetnikov's handwriting was of the sort which is popularly described as a "magpie's claw, not a man's hand." After having lessons in calligraphy for two months he succeeded with great difficulty, through his uncle's influence, in obtaining the job of copying documents in some department. When he went into the well-lighted hall in which gentlemen, with their heads on one side, sat at polished tables, writing with scratchy pens, and when he was seated beside them and a document was set before him to copy—he experienced a very strange

sensation. He felt for a time as though he were at a school for small boys learning his A B C again. The gentlemen sitting round him seemed to him so like school-boys! Some of them read novels which they hid between the big pages of their work, pretending to be busy with the work itself, and at the same time they were in a twitter every time the head of the department appeared. The time at school suddenly rose up before him as a paradise lost for ever: his studies seemed something so much above this paltry work of copying! That preparation for the service seemed to him now far superior to the service itself. And all at once his incomparable wonderful teacher whom no one could replace rose vividly before his mind, and tears suddenly gushed from his eyes, the room began to go round, the tables grew misty, his fellow-clerks were a blur, and he almost swooned. "No," he thought, when he came to himself, "I will set to work, however petty it may seem at first!" Hardening his heart he determined to do his work as the others did.

Is there any place where there are no enjoyments? They exist even in Petersburg in spite of its grim forbidding aspect. There is a cruel frost of thirty degrees in the streets, a witch's hurricane howls like a despairing devil, flapping the collars of men's fur coats against their heads, powdering their moustaches and the noses of beasts: but there is a hospitable gleam from some little window even on the fourth storey; in a cosy room a conversation that warms both heart and soul is carried on to the hiss of the samovar, in the humble light of stearine candles; an inspired and uplifting page is read from one of the poets with whom God has enriched His Russia, and the youthful heart

throbs with a lofty ardour unknown in other lands and under the voluptuous skies of the south.

Tyentyetnikov soon grew used to his office work, but it never became his prime interest and object as he had at first expected; it always took a second place. It served as the best means of filling up his time, making him appreciate more thoroughly the moments that were left him. His uncle, the actual councillor, began to think that his nephew would be of some use, when suddenly his nephew spoilt it all. It must be mentioned that among Andrey Ivanovitch's friends were two who belonged to the class known as disappointed men. They were those strange uncomfortable characters who not only cannot endure injustice but cannot endure anything which to their eyes appears to be injustice. Fundamentally good, though somewhat irresponsible in their own conduct, they were full of intolerance for others. Their heated talk and lofty indignation had a great effect upon him. Working upon his nerves and exciting his irritability, they made him begin to notice all sorts of trivialities to which he would never have dreamt of paying attention in the past. He took a sudden dislike to Fyodor Fyodorovitch Lyenitsyn, the chief of the department in which he served, a man of very prepossessing appearance. He began looking for a mass of defects in him, and detested him on the ground that he displayed too much sweetness in his face when he talked to his superiors and was all vinegar at once when he turned to his inferiors. "I could forgive him," said Tyentyetnikov, "if the change did not take place so quickly in his face: but on the spot, before my eyes, he is sugar and vinegar all in a minute!" From that time forward he began to watch him

at every step. He fancied that Fyodor Fyodorovitch stood on his dignity to excess, that he had all the ways of petty Jacks-in-office, that he noticed unfavourably all those who did not come to pay their respects on holidays, and that he even revenged himself on those whose names did not appear on the list of visitors kept by his porter, and a number of other shortcomings from which no man good or bad is entirely free. He felt a nervous aversion for him. Some evil spirit prompted him to do something unpleasant to Fyodor Fyodorovitch. He sought an opportunity for doing this with peculiar satisfaction and succeeded in finding one. On one occasion he spoke so rudely to him that a message was sent him from the higher authorities that he must either beg his pardon or leave the service. He sent in his resignation. His uncle, the actual civil councillor, came to him, imploring and panic-stricken: "For Christ's sake, upon my word, Andrey Ivanovitch, what's this you have been about? To throw up a career after such a good beginning, just because your chief isn't quite to your liking? What do you mean by it? Why, with that way of looking at things there would be no one left in the service. Think better of it, think better of it, there's still time. Swallow your pride and your *amour propre,* go and see him!"

"That's not the point, uncle," said the nephew. "There's no difficulty about my asking his pardon, especially as I really am to blame. He is my chief and I ought not in any case to have spoken to him as I did. But the real point is this: you have forgotten that I have other duties: I have three hundred peasants, my estate is in disorder and my steward's a fool. It will be no great loss to the state if some one sits in my

place copying papers, but it will be a great loss if three hundred men don't pay their taxes. I am a landowner: there's plenty to do in that position also. If I concern myself with the preservation, care and improvement of the people entrusted to me and present the state with three hundred sober, hardworking subjects, in what way will my work be inferior to that of some chief of a department like Lyenitsyn?"

The actual civil councillor was open-mouthed with astonishment: he had not expected such a flood of words. After a moment's reflection he began after this style: "But all the same . . . however can you? . . . How can you vegetate in the country? What society will you have among peasants? Here anyway a general or prince may pass you in the street, if you like you can walk by the beautiful public buildings, or can go and look at the Neva, but there, whoever you pass will be a peasant. Why condemn yourself to rustic ignorance all your life?"

So spoke his uncle, the actual civil councillor. He had never walked down any street but that which led to the office, and there were no beautiful public buildings in it; he did not notice any of the people he met, whether they were princes or generals, knew nothing of the temptations by which people prone to incontinence are allured in cities, nor did he even go to the theatre. He had said all that he did to stir the ambition and work upon the imagination of the young man. He did not succeed in doing so however. Tyentyetnikov stuck to his decision. He had begun to be bored with official work and Petersburg. The country began to seem to him a haven of freedom, fostering thought and meditation and the one career of use-

ful activity. A fortnight after this conversation he was approaching the places where his childhood had been spent.

How his heart beat, how many memories came back to him when he felt that he was near the village of his fathers! Many places he had completely forgotten and he looked with curiosity at the glorious views as though they were new to him. When the road passed by a narrow ravine into the recesses of an immense tangled forest, when he saw above, below, over his head and beneath his feet, oaks three hundred years old, which it would take three men to span, silver firs, elms, black poplars, and when in answer to the question, "Whose forest is this?" he was told, "Tyentyetnikov's"; and when, leaving the forest, the road ran through meadows, by aspen copses, willows old and young, and twining creepers, in sight of the heights stretching in the distance, and in various places passed over several bridges across the same river, having it sometimes on the right and sometimes on the left, and when in answer to the question, "Whose prairies and water meadows are these?" he was told "Tyentyetnikov's"; when the road mounted a hill and passed along a high plateau with fields of standing corn, wheat, rye and barley on one side, while on the other lay all the part they had driven through already, which suddenly seemed to be in a picturesque distance; and when, gradually overshadowed, the way dived into and afterwards emerged from the shade of huge spreading trees dotted here and there on the green turf right up to the village, and he caught a glimpse of the brick huts and the red roofed buildings surrounding the big house; when his eagerly throbbing heart knew with-

out question where he had arrived, all the thoughts and sensations that had been accumulating within him burst forth in some such words as these: "Well, haven't I been a fool! Fate made me the owner of an earthly paradise, a prince, and I bound myself as a copying clerk in an office! After being educated and enlightened and accumulating a decent store of just that knowledge which is needed for the ruling of men, for the improvement of a whole region, for performing the duties of a landowner who has to be at once a judge and an organiser and a guardian of order—to entrust the task to an ignorant steward! And to choose in place of it what?—the copying of papers which a cantonist who has learnt anything could do incomparably better," and Andrey Ivanovitch called himself a fool once more.

And meanwhile, another spectacle was awaiting him. Hearing of the master's arrival the population of the whole village had gathered at the entrance. Bright-coloured kerchiefs, sashes, headbands, full-skirted coats, beards of all shapes—shovel, spade, wedge-shaped, red, fair, and white as silver, covered the whole court in front of the house. The peasants boomed out: "Our dead master, we have lived to see you again!" The women chanted: "Thou golden one, silver of our hearts!" Those who stood further off actually began fighting to get nearer. A decrepit little old woman who looked like a dried pear, darted between the legs of the others, stepped up to him, clasped her hands and shrieked: "Our nurseling! But how thin you are! the accursed foreigners have worn you out!" "Get away, woman!" the beards, shovel, spade, and wedge-shaped, shouted to her. "Where are you

shoving to, you shrivelled thing?" Some one added to this an expression at which only a Russian peasant could help laughing. Andrey Ivanovitch could not refrain from laughter, but nevertheless he was deeply touched at heart. "How much love, and what for?" he thought to himself, "in return for my never having seen them, never having troubled about them! I swear from to-day that I will share your labours and your toils! I will do everything to help you to become what you ought to be, what the goodness innate in you meant you to be—that your love for me may not be for nothing, that I really may be a good master to you!"

And Tyentyetnikov really did set to work looking after his estate and his peasants in earnest. He saw at once that the steward really was an old woman and a fool with all the characteristics of a thoroughly bad steward—that is, he accurately kept an account of hens and eggs, of the yarn and the linen brought by the peasant women, but he knew absolutely nothing of harvest and sowing, and in addition suspected all the peasants of designs upon his life. He dismissed the foolish steward and engaged another, a smart fellow, in his place: without going into trivial matters he turned his attention to the points of most importance, diminished the dues, took off some of the days of labour for himself, giving the peasants more time to work on their own account, and thought that now things would go swimmingly. He went into everything himself and began to show himself in the fields, at the threshing floor, in the sheepfolds, at the mills and at the landing stage when barges and punts were being loaded and sent off.

"My word, but he is a sharp one!" the peasants began

to say, and they even scratched their heads a bit, for under the feeble control that had lasted so long they had all grown lazy. But this did not go on for very long. The Russian peasant is clever and shrewd: they soon realised that though the master was zealous and eager to undertake a great deal, he had no idea as yet how to set to work, that he talked somehow too learnedly and fancifully, beyond the grasp and understanding of the peasants. It came about that the master and the peasants, though they did not completely misunderstand each other, could not, so to speak, sing in unison, were incapable of producing the same note. Tyentyetnikov began to notice that everything somehow turned out worse on the master's land than on the peasants'. His fields were sown earlier and the crops came up later. Yet they seemed to be working well: he himself was present, and even ordered them to be given a mug of vodka for their diligent work. The peasants' rye had already long been in ear, their oats were dropping, their millet was growing into a tuft, while his corn had scarcely begun to push up into a stem, the base of the ear had not yet formed. In fact he began to notice that the peasants were simply taking him in, in spite of all their flatteries; he tried reproaching them, but received some such answer, "How could we neglect the master's profit, your honour? you saw yourself, sir, how we did our best when we were ploughing and sowing, you ordered us to be given a mug of vodka"; what reply could he make to that? "But why has it come up so badly?" he persisted. "Who can tell! It seems the worms have eaten it below! And look what a summer it has been, no rain at all." But he saw that the worms had not eaten the

peasants' corn, and that the rain must have fallen queerly in streaks—it had favoured the peasants' land, and not a drop had trickled on the master's fields. He found it still more difficult to get on with the women. They were continually asking to be let off their work, complaining of the heavy burden of the labours they had to perform for him. It was strange! He had abolished all the dues of linen, fruit, mushrooms and nuts, and had taken off half of their other forced labour, expecting the women to employ their free time attending to their households, sewing and making clothes for their husbands and enlarging their kitchen gardens. But nothing of the sort happened. Such idleness, squabbling, scandal-mongering prevailed among the fair sex that their husbands were continually coming to him, saying: "Master, will you bring this fury of a woman to her senses, she is a regular devil, there is no living with her!" Sometimes, hardening his heart, he attempted to resort to severity. But how could he be severe? The woman came, so hopelessly womanish, made such a shrill outcry, was so sick and ailing, and had got herself up in such wretched filthy rags! (where she had picked them up, goodness only knows). "Go away, go where you like as long as it is out of my sight," said poor Tyentyetnikov, and immediately afterwards had the satisfaction of seeing the woman at once, on going out of the gate, come to blows with a neighbour over a turnip and in spite of her ailing condition give her as sound a leathering as any sturdy peasant could have done.

He had an idea of setting up a school among them, but this led to such a ridiculous fiasco that he hung his

head and felt that it would have been better not to have thought of it. All this perceptibly cooled his zeal for looking after his estate as well as for the judicial and moral duties of his position, in fact for activity generally. He was present at the field labours almost without noticing them; his thoughts were far away, his eyes sought extraneous objects. During the mowing he did not watch the rapid rising and falling of the sixty scythes, and the regular fall of the high grass into long rows beneath them; he looked away at some bend in the river, on the bank of which some red-beaked, red-legged martin was walking—a bird of course, not a man; he watched how the martin having caught a fish held it crossways in his beak, hesitating whether to swallow it or not, and at the same time looked up the river where another martin could be seen who had not yet caught a fish, but was watching intently the martin who had. When the corn was being cut he did not watch how the sheaves were being laid in cocks or ricks or sometimes simply in a heap; he did not care whether they threw the sheaves up and made the cornstacks lazily or vigorously. Screwing up his eyes and gazing upwards at the vast expanse of the sky, he let his nostrils drink in the scent of the fields and his ears marvel at the voices of the numberless singers of the air when from all sides, from heaven and earth alike they unite in one chorus, without jarring on one another. The quail lashes its whip, the landrail utters its harsh grating cry among the grass, the linnets twitter and chirrup as they flit to and fro, the trills of the lark fall drop by drop down an unseen airy ladder, and the calls of the cranes, floating by in a long string, like the ringing notes of silver bugles, re-

sound in the void of the melodiously vibrating ether. If the work were going on near by, he was far away; if it were far away, his eyes sought something near by. And he was like an inattentive schoolboy who looks into a book but sees his schoolfellow making a long nose at him. At last he gave up going out to look at the work altogether, abandoned his judicial duties, settled indoors and even left off seeing his steward and receiving reports from him.

At times some of the neighbours would come to see him—a retired lieutenant of the Hussars, an inveterate pipe-smoker and saturated through and through with tobacco smoke, or an old martinet colonel, a great hand at small talk about everything. But this too began to bore him. Their conversation began to strike him as superficial; their brisk sprightly manner, their way of slapping him on the knee, and their free and easy behaviour generally, seemed to him too blunt and unreserved. He made up his mind to drop their acquaintance and did so rather curtly. When Varvar Nikolaitch Vishnepokromov, the most typical martinet among all colonels, and most agreeable of all small talkers, called upon him expressly to converse to his heart's content, touching upon politics, philosophy, literature and morality and even the financial position of England, he sent word that he was not at home and at the same time was so incautious as to show himself at the window. The visitor's eyes met his. One of course muttered between his teeth, "Beast!" while the other threw some epithet like "Pig!" after him. So the acquaintance ended. From that time no one else came to see him. Complete solitude reigned in the house. The young man got into his

dressing-gown for good, abandoning his body to inactivity and his mind to meditating upon a work on Russia. The reader has seen already how he meditated upon it. The days came and went, uniform and monotonous. It cannot be said, however, that there were not moments when he seemed as it were to awaken from sleep. When the post brought him newspapers, new books and magazines, and when he saw in print the familiar name of some old schoolfellow who had already been successful in a distinguished career in the government service, or who had made some modest contribution to science and universal culture, a quiet secret melancholy crept over his heart, and a quiet dumbly-sorrowful aching regret at his own inactivity rose up in spite of himself. Then his life seemed to him hateful and loathsome. His school-days rose up before him extraordinarily vividly, and Alexandr Petrovitch seemed to stand before him. . . . Tears streamed from his eyes, his sobs lasted almost all day.

What did those sobs mean? Did his sick soul betray in them the sorrowful secret of its sickness—that the fine inner man, that had begun to be formed within him, had not had time to develop and grow strong; that unpractised in the struggle with failure he had never attained the precious faculty of rising to higher things and gaining strength from obstacles and difficulties; that the rich treasure of lofty feelings that had glowed within him like molten metal had not been tempered like steel, and now his will had no elasticity and was impotent; that his rare, marvellous teacher had died too soon, and now there was no one in the whole world who could rouse and awaken his forces, flagging from continual hesitation, and his weak, im-

potent will—who could cry to the soul in a living, rousing voice, the rousing word: "Forward!" which the Russian, at every stage, in every condition and calling, thirsts to hear?

Where is the man who can utter that all-powerful word "Forward," in the language of our Russian soul, who knowing all the strength and quality and all the depth of our nature can, with one wonder-working gesture, spur the Russian on to the higher life? With what tears and what love would he be repaid! But centuries after centuries pass by; half a million sluggards and idlers lie plunged in unwaking slumber, and rarely is the man born in Russia that can utter that all-powerful word.

Something happened, however, that almost roused Tyentyetnikov from his apathy, and almost brought about a transformation in his character. It was something almost like love, but it too came to nothing. In the neighbourhood, some eight miles away, there lived the general who, as we have seen, gave a rather doubtful opinion of Tyentyetnikov. The general lived like a general, was hospitable and liked people to come and pay their respects to him; he did not himself pay visits, talked in a husky voice, was fond of reading, and had a daughter, a strange unique creature who was more like a fantastic apparition than a woman. Sometimes a man sees something of the sort in a dream, and all his life afterwards is brooding on that vision (and reality is lost to him for ever), and he is good for nothing. Her name was Ulinka. Her education had been rather unusual, she had been brought up by an English governess who did not know a word of Russian. She had lost her mother early in

childhood. Her father had no time to look after her, and indeed, loving his daughter passionately, he could have done nothing but spoil her. It is uncommonly hard to draw her portrait. She was as full of life as life itself. She was more charming than any beauty; she was more than intelligent; more graceful and ethereal than the classical antique. It was impossible to say what country had put its imprint on her, for it would be hard to find such a profile and features anywhere, except perhaps in antique cameos. Everything in her was original as in a child brought up in freedom. If any one had seen how sudden anger would bring stern lines in her lovely forehead, and how passionately she disputed with her father, he would have thought that she was a most ill-humoured creature. But her wrath was only aroused when she heard of some injustice, whatever it might be, or of some cruel action. And how instantly that anger would have passed if she had seen the very person, who had excited it, in trouble! How immediately she would have flung him her purse without considering whether it was wise or foolish to do so, and would have torn up her dress to make bandages if he were wounded! There was something impulsive in her. When she spoke, everything in her seemed to be rushing after her thoughts—the expression of her face, the tone of her voice, the movement of her hands; the very folds of her dress seemed flying in the same direction, and it seemed as though she herself would fly away after her own words. Nothing in her was concealed. She was not afraid to lay bare her thoughts before any one, and no force could have made her be silent when she wanted to speak. Her fascinating individual gait, which belonged to

her only, was so fearlessly free that every one involuntarily made way for her to pass. An evil man could not help being confused and dumb in her presence, while any one good, however shy, could talk to her at once as though she were a sister, and, strange illusion!—from the first minute it seemed as though he had somewhere, sometime, known her already, that they had met in days of unremembered infancy in their own home, on some happy evening, among the joyous shouts of a crowd of children, and after that the years of discretion seemed dull and dreary.

Andrey Ivanovitch Tyentyetnikov could never have said how it was that from the first day they were as though they had known each other all their lives. A new inexplicable feeling came into his heart. His life was for an instant lighted up. His dressing-gown was for a time laid aside. He did not linger so long in bed in the morning, and Mihailo did not have to stand so long with a washing basin in his hands. The windows were thrown open in the rooms, and the owner of the picturesque estate spent a long while wandering about the dark winding paths of his garden, and stood for hours gazing at the enchanting view into the distance. At first the general received Tyentyetnikov fairly cordially, but they could not get on really well together. Their conversations always ended in an argument and in a rather unpleasant feeling on both sides. The general did not like contradiction or controversy, though on the other hand he was very fond of talking even of subjects of which he knew nothing at all. Tyentyetnikov, too, was rather ready to take offence. For the sake of the daughter, however, much was forgiven to the father, and the peace was kept

between them until some relations, Countess Boldyrev and Princess Yuzyakin, came to stay with the general: one was a widow, the other an old maiden lady, both had been maids of honour in earlier days, were somewhat given to gossip and talking scandal, and not particularly distinguished by their amiability, but they had important connections in Petersburg, and the general almost grovelled before them. It struck Tyentyetnikov that from the very day of their arrival the general became more frigid, scarcely noticed him, treated him as though he were a nonentity or the very humblest sort of clerk employed for copying. He addressed him as "my lad," or "my good man," and on one occasion even used the second person singular in speaking to him. Andrey Ivanovitch was furious; the blood rushed to his head. Controlling himself and setting his teeth, he had, however, the presence of mind to say in a particularly soft and courteous voice, while patches of colour came into his face and he was inwardly boiling: "I ought to thank you, general, for your warm feeling; you invite me by your familiar form of address to the closest friendship, obliging me to address you in the same way, but allow me to observe that I do not forget the difference in our ages, which absolutely forbids such familiarity in our manners." The general was abashed. Collecting his thoughts he began to say, though rather incoherently, that he had not meant it in that sense, that it is sometimes permissible for an old man to address a young man in that informal way (he did not make the faintest allusion to his rank). Their acquaintance was of course cut short from that time. Love ended as soon as it began; the light that had gleamed before him

for one instant was quenched, and the gloom that followed it was darker than ever. The sluggard got back into his dressing-gown again. His life was again spent in lying about and doing nothing. Dirt and disorder reigned in the house: the broom remained in the room together with the dust for days together; his trousers even made their way into the drawing-room; on the elegant table in front of the sofa lay a pair of greasy braces as though it were a tit-bit for a guest. And his life became so drowsy and abject that not only his servants ceased to respect him, but even the hens almost pecked at him. For hours at a time he would scribble feebly, drawing crooked trees, little houses, huts, carts, sledges, or he would write "Honoured Sir!" with an exclamation mark after it in all sorts of handwritings and characters. And sometimes while he was still plunged in forgetfulness, his pen would of itself, without his knowledge, sketch a little head that seemed to be taking flight, with delicate pointed features, with a light tress of hair raised and falling from under the comb, in long, delicate curls, with bare youthful arms—and with amazement he saw that it had turned into a portrait of her whose portrait no artist could paint. And he was even more sorrowful after that, and believing that there was no happiness on earth he was depressed and hopeless for the rest of the day.

Such were the circumstances of Andrey Ivanovitch Tyentyetnikov. Suddenly one day, on going to the window as usual with his cup of tea and his pipe, he noticed some commotion and bustle in the yard. The kitchen boy and the woman who scrubbed the floors were running to open the gate, and in the gate appeared three horses exactly as they are carved or

moulded on triumphal arches, that is, one horse's head to the right, one to the left and one in the middle. On the box above them were a coachman and a footman wearing a full frock-coat, girt round the waist with a pocket-handkerchief; behind them sat a gentleman in a cap and greatcoat, wrapped in a shawl of rainbow hues. When the carriage turned before the front door it appeared that it was nothing more than a light chaise on springs. A gentleman of exceptionally decorous exterior skipped out on to the steps with the swiftness and agility almost of a military man.

Andrey Ivanovitch was scared; he thought he might be a police officer. It must be explained that in his youth he had been mixed up in rather a foolish affair. Some philosophers among the Hussars, and a student who had not completed his studies, and a spendthrift gambler got up a philanthropic society under the sole direction of an old rogue, freemason and cardsharper, who was a drunkard and a very eloquent person. The society was formed with an extremely grandiose object—to secure the happiness of all humanity. The funds required were immense. The amount of money subscribed by the generous members was incredible. Where it all went no one knew but the sole director. Tyentyetnikov was drawn into this society by two friends who were disappointed men, good-natured fellows, who became habitual drunkards through continually drinking toasts to science, enlightenment and progress. Tyentyetnikov quickly realised the position and got out of the circle. But the society succeeded in getting mixed up with other doings rather below the dignity of gentlemen, so that it even attracted the notice of the police. . . . So that it was no wonder

that even though he had left the society and broken off all relations with the benefactor of mankind, Tyentyetnikov could not help feeling some anxiety, for his conscience was not quite at ease. And now he looked, not without alarm, at the door which was about to open.

His fears were, however, soon dispelled when his visitor made his bows with incredible elegance, keeping his head respectfully bent on one side. In brief but definite phrases he explained that for some time past he had been travelling about Russia, both on business of his own and for the purpose of gathering information, that our empire abounded in objects of inherent interest apart from the beauties of nature, the number of industries, and the variety of soils; that he had been carried away by the beautiful scenery of Tyentyetnikov's estate; that in spite of the beautiful scenery of his village he would not have ventured to disturb him by his ill-timed visit, but that something had happened to his chaise, which called for the skilled hand of blacksmiths and wheelwrights; but that, for all that, even if nothing had happened to his chaise, he could hardly have denied himself the pleasure of calling to pay his respects in person. As he finished his speech the visitor with fascinating courtesy scraped with his foot, making a little skip backwards as he did so, with the lightness of an india-rubber ball.

Andrey Ivanovitch thought that this must be some learned professor in search of knowledge, who was travelling about Russia to collect plants or possibly even geological specimens. He protested his readiness to assist him in every way, offered him the serv-

ices of his workmen, his wheelwrights and his blacksmiths for the repair of the chaise and begged him to make himself at home; he made his affable visitor sit down in a big Voltairean armchair, and prepared himself to listen to his conversation, which he did not doubt would deal with learned or scientific subjects.

The visitor, however, touched rather upon the incidents of the inner world. He spoke of the mutability of destiny, compared his life to a ship in mid-ocean, driven before the winds; referred to the fact that he had frequently had to change his appointments and his duties, that he had suffered a great deal in the cause of justice, that his life even had more than once been in danger from his enemies, and he said a great deal more from which Tyentyetnikov could gather that his visitor was rather a practical man. In conclusion he brought out a white cambric handkerchief and blew his nose more loudly than Andrey Ivanovitch had ever heard any one do. Sometimes in an orchestra there is a rascally trumpet which, when it gives a blast, seems to be blaring right in one's ear: such was the sound which echoed through the awakened rooms of the slumbering house, and it was immediately followed by an agreeable fragrance of eau-de-Cologne, invisibly diffused by the deft flourish of the cambric pocket-handkerchief.

The reader will have perhaps guessed already that the visitor was no other than our honoured and long-deserted Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov. He was a little older; evidently this interval had not been free from storms and agitations. It seemed as though even the coat he wore were rather older, and the chaise, and the coachman and the groom and the horses, and the har-

ness seemed as though they were a little worn and shabby. It seemed as though his finances too were not in a condition to be envied. But the expression of his face, his propriety, his affability were unchanged. It seemed as though he were even more agreeable in his manners and deportment. He crossed his legs even more elegantly when he sat down in an armchair; there was a still greater softness in the utterance of his words and circumspect moderation in his sayings and his looks, more discretion in his behaviour and more tact in everything. His collar and cuffs were cleaner and whiter than snow, and although he came straight from the road there was not a speck on his coat; he might have been going to a nameday party. His cheeks and chin were so smoothly shaven that only a blind man could fail to admire their agreeable curves.

A transformation took place in the house at once. Half of the house, which had been in darkness with its shutters closed, looked out on the light again. They began bringing in the luggage from the chaise, and arranging it in the rooms now flooded with light; soon in the room that was destined for a bedroom all the things essential for the toilet were installed; in the room destined for the study . . . But first of all it is essential that the reader should know that there were three tables in the room: one a writing-table in front of the sofa, another a card-table against the wall between the windows, and the third a corner table in the corner between the door into the bedroom and the door into an uninhabited room full of invalid furniture. On this corner table the clothes taken from the portmanteau were placed, that is: one pair of old and

one pair of new trousers to wear with his dress-coat, a pair of trousers to go with the frock-coat, a pair of grey trousers, two velvet waistcoats and two satin ones, a frock-coat and two dress-coats (the white piqué waistcoats and the summer trousers had gone with the under-linen into the chest of drawers in the bedroom). These were all piled one upon another in a pyramid and covered with a silk pocket-handkerchief. In another corner between the door and the window the boots were stored in a row, a pair of top boots, not quite new, a pair perfectly new, a pair of top boots with new uppers and a pair of low patent leather boots. They too were modestly veiled with a silk pocket-handkerchief, so that they might not have been there at all. On the table between the two windows lay the writing-case. On the table before the sofa lay his portfolio, a bottle of eau-de-Cologne, sealing-wax, tooth brushes, a new calendar and two novels, both second volumes. The clean linen was all put away in the chest of drawers which was already in the bedroom; the linen that was to go to the laundress was done up into a bundle and thrust under the bed. The portmanteau being empty was also stored under the bed. The sword too was taken into the bedroom and hung on a nail not far from the bed. Both the rooms acquired an extraordinary air of neatness and tidiness, nowhere was there a scrap of paper, a feather or litter of any kind, the very air seemed to have become more refined. The agreeable odour of a fresh healthy man who changed his linen frequently, visited the bath-house and sponged himself all over on Sunday mornings was permanently installed in the room. The odour of Petrushka, the footman, made an effort to establish itself in the vestibule adjoining, but Pe-

trushka was soon banished to the kitchen, which was indeed a more suitable place for him.

For the first few days Andrey Ivanovitch was apprehensive for his independence, fearing that the visitor might be a constraint and might involve changes in his manner of life, and might disturb the order of his day so satisfactorily established. But his apprehensions were groundless. The guest displayed an unusual capacity for adapting himself to everything. He applauded his host's philosophical leisureliness, saying that it gave him promise of living to be a hundred. He expressed himself very felicitously about solitude, also saying that it fostered great ideas in a man. Glancing at the bookcase, he spoke with approval of books in general, observing that they preserved a man from idleness. In short, he dropped few words, but they were weighty ones. In his conduct he was even more tactful; appeared at the right minute and at the right minute retired; did not pester his host with questions when he was disinclined for conversation; was pleased to play chess with him, and was pleased to sit silent. While his host was puffing out tobacco smoke in curly clouds the visitor, who did not smoke, bethought himself of an occupation in keeping with it; he would for instance take his black and silver snuff-box from out of his pocket, and holding it between two fingers of his left hand, twirl it round rapidly with one finger of his right hand, just as the terrestrial globe rotates on its own axis, or simply drummed upon it with his fingers, whistling some undefined tune. In short, he did not hinder his host in any way. "For the first time in my life I've met a man with whom I could live," Tyentyetnikov said to himself. "As a rule that gift is rare amongst us. There are plenty of peo-

ple among us, intelligent, cultured, good-natured, but people who are always agreeable, always good-tempered, people with whom one might live all one's life without quarrelling, I don't know whether many such people could be found in Russia! This is the first and only man I have seen." So Tyentyetnikov characterised his visitor.

Tchitchikov for his part was very glad to be settled for a time in the house of so peaceful and inoffensive a man. He was sick of a gipsy's life. To rest if only for a month in a beautiful country place, in view of the fields and the coming spring was beneficial even from the point of view of his digestion. It would have been hard to find a better retreat to rest in. The spring decked it out with inexpressible beauty. What brilliance there was in the green! What freshness in the air! What bird notes in the woods! Paradise, joy and exaltation everywhere! The country resounded with singing as though born to new life.

Tchitchikov walked about a great deal. Sometimes he took his walks about the flat plateau that crowned the heights, keeping to the edges of it from which he had a view of the valleys in the distance where big lakes still remained from the flooded river; or he went out into the ravines, where the trees, just beginning to be green with leaves and weighed down with birds' nests, and the narrow strip of blue between them were darkened by the continual flitting to and fro of flocks of crows and resounded with the harsh cries of the crows, the chatter of the jackdaws and the cawing of the rooks; or he went down hill to the water meadows and the broken-down dam, watching the water as it rushed to fall upon the mill wheels with a deafening

sound; or he made his way further to the landing-stage from which the first boats laden with peas, oats, barley or wheat were setting off as the river thawed; or he went off to the fields where the first labours of spring were beginning, to see the ploughed land lie like a black streak across the green, or the deft sower scatter the seed from the hollow of his hand, evenly, accurately, not letting a single grain fall to one side or the other. He talked to the steward and the peasants and the miller, discussing how and why and what sort of crops were to be expected, and how the ploughing was going, and at what price wheat was being sold, and what they charged in spring and autumn for the grinding of the flour, and what each peasant's name was, and which was related to which, and who bought the cows and what they fed the pigs on—in fact everything. He found out too how many of the peasants had died. It appeared that they were few in number. Being an intelligent man he saw at once that Tyentyetnikov's land was not being well managed, on every hand he saw omissions, neglect, thieving, and a good deal of drunkenness. And inwardly he said to himself: "What a brute that Tyentyetnikov is! To neglect an estate that might bring in at least fifty thousand roubles a year!" And unable to restrain his just indignation, he repeated, "He certainly is a brute!" More than once during these walks the idea occurred to him that he might, not now of course, but later on when his great enterprise had been accomplished and he had the means, become a peaceful owner of a similar estate. At this point there usually rose up before his mind the image of its youthful mistress, a fresh white-skinned young woman, of the merchant class perhaps,

though with the breeding and education of a girl of noble birth, so that she might know something of music; music of course was of no great consequence, but since it was considered the proper thing, why run counter to public opinion? He pictured also the younger generation, destined to perpetuate the name of Tchitchikov: a rogue of a boy and a beautiful little daughter, or even a couple of urchins and two or even three little girls that every one might know that he had really lived and existed, that he might not have seemed to have passed through life like a shadow or a phantom, and might be able to hold up his head feeling he had done his duty to his country. It occurred to him also that it might not be amiss to obtain a higher grade in the service; that of a civil councillor for instance, a grade held in honour and respect. . . . And many things came into his mind such as often carry a man away from dreary actuality, disturb, stir and tantalise him and are sweet to him even when he knows that they will never come to pass.

Pavel Ivanovitch's servants liked the place too. Like him they felt at home in it. Petrushka was very quickly friends with Grigory, though at first they tried to impress each other and gave themselves insufferable airs. Petrushka scored off Grigory by having been in Kostroma, Yaroslavl, Nizhni and even Moscow: Grigory completely floored him with Petersburg, where Petrushka had never been. The latter tried to recover his prestige by enlarging on the great remoteness of the places which he had visited, but Grigory mentioned a locality, the name of which could not be found on any map, and reckoned up journeys of more than twenty thousand miles, so that Petrushka was stag-

gered, and stood gaping, while all the servants laughed at him. It ended in their becoming the closest friends, however: bald-headed Uncle Pimen kept a celebrated tavern, the name of which was "Akulka," at the farther end of the village: every hour of the day they were to be seen in this establishment, there they became bosom friends, or what is called among the peasants—pot-house inseparables.

Selifan found other allurements. Every evening was spent in singing, games, and country dances in the village. Fine, graceful girls, such as it would be hard to find elsewhere, made him for some hours gape in astonishment. It was hard to say which was the finest of them, they were all white-bosomed and white-throated, they all had eyes like turnips—languishing eyes; they had the step of a peacock and their plaits reached to their waists. When he held their white hands and slowly moved with them in the figures of the dance, or when in a row with other young fellows he advanced like a wall to meet them, and the warmly glowing evening died away, and the country all around was slowly wrapped in darkness, and far away beyond the river there sounded the faithful echo of the always melancholy chant, he did not know himself what was happening to him. Long afterwards he dreamed both sleeping and waking that white hands lay in his, and he was moving with them in the dance. . . . With a wave of his hand he would say: "Those damned girls won't let me alone!"

Tchitchikov's horses were also pleased with their new abode. Both the shaft horse and the bay-coloured trace horse, known as Assessor, as well as the dappled grey, whom Selifan called "the rascally horse,"

found their sojourn at Tyentyetnikov's anything but tedious. The oats were excellent, and the arrangements of the stables exceptionally convenient, each one had a stall partitioned off, yet through this partition he could see the other horses, so that if any one of them, even the furthest, took a fancy to neigh he could be answered at once.

In short they all felt at home. The reader may be surprised that Tchitchikov had not yet breathed a word in regard to his favourite subject. No, indeed! Pavel Ivanovitch had become very cautious in regard to that subject. Even if he had had to deal with absolute fools he would not have begun upon it quite immediately, and Tyentyetnikov, whatever he might be, read books, talked philosophy and tried to find an explanation of everything that happened and the why and wherefore of everything. . . . "No, the devil take him! perhaps I had better begin from another side," thought Tchitchikov. Chatting from time to time with the servants he learned among other things from them that their master used pretty often to visit his neighbour the general, that there was a young lady at the general's, that their master had been "taken" with the young lady and the young lady had been "taken" with their master . . . but that afterwards they had fallen out about something and parted. He noticed himself that Andrey Ivanovitch was always with pen or pencil drawing little heads, one like the other. One day soon after dinner, as he sat making his silver snuffbox rotate on its axis as usual, he spoke as follows: "You have got everything, Andrey Ivanovitch, there is only one thing wanting." "What's that?" asked the other, letting off coils of smoke. "A partner to share your life," said Tchitchikov. Andrey Ivano-

vitch, said nothing; and with that the conversation ended. Tchitchikov was not disconcerted. He chose another moment, this time just before supper, and after talking of one thing and another, said suddenly: "You know really, Andrey Ivanovitch, it wouldn't be at all amiss for you to get married." Tyentyetnikov said not a word in reply, as though he disliked any talk on the subject. Tchitchikov was not disconcerted. For the third time he chose a moment, this time after supper, and spoke thus: "It's all very well but the more I turn over your circumstances in my mind, the more clearly I see that you must get married: you will fall into hypochondria." Either Tchitchikov's words were so convincing, or Andrey Ivanovitch's mood was particularly favourable for openness—he heaved a sigh and said, blowing tobacco smoke into the air: "You need to be born lucky for everything, you know, Pavel Ivanovitch." And he told him the whole story of his acquaintance with the general and their rupture, exactly as it had all happened.

When Tchitchikov heard the whole story, word for word, and saw that the trouble had entirely originated from the word "thou," he was aghast. For some minutes he looked steadily into Tyentyetnikov's face and inwardly concluded: "Why, he is a perfect fool!"

"Andrey Ivanovitch, upon my soul!" said he, gripping both his hands: "Where is the insult? What is there insulting in the word 'thou'?"

"There is nothing insulting in the word itself," answered Tyentyetnikov, "but in the significance of the word, in the voice in which it was uttered, that is where the insult lies. Thou! that means 'Remember that you are of no importance; I receive you only because there is no one better, but if some Princess

Yuzyakin comes, you know your place and stand at the door!' That's what it means." As the mild and gentle Andrey Ivanovitch said this his eyes flashed, and a thrill of angry resentment could be heard in his voice.

"Well, even if it were said in that sense, what of it?" said Tchitchikov.

"What?" said Tyentyetnikov, gazing intently at Tchitchikov, "you would have me visit him again after such an action?"

"What do you mean by action, it's not an action at all," said Tchitchikov.

"What a strange fellow this Tchitchikov is!" thought Tyentyetnikov to himself.

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"It's not behaviour, Andrey Ivanovitch. It's simply a habit with generals: they say thou to everybody. Besides why not allow it in an honourable and distinguished man?"

"That's a different matter," said Tyentyetnikov. "If he were a poor old man, not proud and stuck up, not a general, I would allow him to call me thou, and even accept it with respect."

"He's a perfect idiot," thought Tchitchikov to himself. "He would allow some ragged fellow but not a general!" and upon this reflection he retorted aloud: "Very good, let us suppose he did insult you, but you were quits with him anyway, you insulted him and he insulted you. But to part for ever on account of a trifle, upon my word, it is beyond everything. How could you give things up when they were only just beginning? Once you have set an object before you you must persist in spite of all obstacles. What's the use

of minding whether a man's insulting! people are also insulting. You won't find any one in the world nowadays that isn't insulting."

Tyentyetnikov was completely nonplussed by this observation. He was disconcerted, he looked into Pavel Ivanovitch's face and thought to himself: "A very strange fellow this Tchitchikov!"

"What a queer creature this Tyentyetnikov is!" Tchitchikov was thinking meanwhile.

"Allow me to set things right," he said aloud. "I can go to his Excellency's and say that it happened through a misunderstanding on your part, owing to your youth and your ignorance of life and the world."

"I don't intend to grovel before him!" said Tyentyetnikov emphatically.

"God forbid, grovel!" said Tchitchikov, and crossed himself. "To influence him by advice like a prudent mediator, but to grovel . . . excuse me, Andrey Ivanovitch, I did not expect that in return for my good will and devotion . . . I did not expect you to take my words in such an offensive sense!"

"Forgive me, Pavel Ivanovitch, I was to blame!" said Tyentyetnikov, genuinely touched, taking both his hands gratefully. "Your kind sympathy is precious to me, I assure you! But let us drop this subject, let us never speak of it again!"

"In that case I'll simply go to the general's without any reason," said Tchitchikov.

"What for?" asked Tyentyetnikov, looking at Tchitchikov with surprise.

"To pay him my respect," said Tchitchikov.

"What a strange fellow this Tchitchikov is!" thought Tyentyetnikov.

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"As my chaise is not yet in fit condition," said Tchitchikov, "allow me to borrow a carriage from you. I will go and call upon him about ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Good heavens, what a thing to ask! Everything here is at your disposal, take any carriage you like, everything is at your service."

They said good-night and went off to bed, not without reflecting each on the other's queerness.

Strange to relate, however, next morning when the carriage was brought round for Tchitchikov and he jumped into it with the lightness almost of a military man, wearing his new dress-coat, white cravat and waistcoat, and rolled off to pay his respects to the general, Tyentyetnikov was thrown into an agitation such as he had not experienced for a long time. The whole current of his ideas which had been slumbering and had grown dull were awakened to restless activity. All the feelings of the idler, who had hitherto been plunged in careless sloth, were suddenly caught up in a nervous tumult. At one moment he sat down on the sofa, then he went to the window, then he took up a book, then he tried to think. A fruitless attempt! A thought would not come into his head. Then he tried to think of nothing at all. A fruitless effort. Fragments of something like thought, shreds and ends of thoughts forced themselves on him and pecked at his brain from all sides. "What a strange condition!" he said, and moving towards the window, looked out at the road which was intersected by the oak copse, and at the end of it he saw still floating in the air the dust raised by the carriage.

CHAPTER II

IN a little over half an hour the horses had borne Tchitchikov over the seven or eight miles, at first through an oak copse, then by cornfields just beginning to turn green in the midst of the freshly ploughed land, then along the edge of the hillside from which fresh views over the distant plain came into sight every minute, and finally by a wide avenue of spreading lime-trees leading up to the general's village. The avenue of limes was followed by an avenue of poplars, protected below by hurdles, and ended in open-work iron gates, through which peeped the ornately magnificent carved façade of the general's house, supported by eight columns with Corinthian capitals. Everywhere there was a smell of oil paint, with which everything was continually renewed, so that nothing could fall into decay. The courtyard was like a parquet floor for cleanliness. Driving up to the front door Tchitchikov mounted the steps deferentially, sent in his name, and was conducted straight to the study.

He was impressed by the general's majestic appearance. He was attired at the moment in a crimson satin dressing-gown. He had a frank glance, a manly face, grizzled whiskers and big moustaches, his hair was closely cropped, and especially so at the back. His neck was stout and thick, a neck in three storeys, as it is called (that is in three lateral folds with a

crease at right angles to them), his voice was a somewhat husky bass, his gestures and deportment were those of a general. General Betrishtchev was, like all of us sinful mortals, possessed of many good qualities, and also of many defects; both were mixed up together in him in a sort of picturesque disorder, as is apt to be the case with Russians: he was capable of self-sacrifice, magnanimity, valour at critical moments, and was possessed of intelligence, and with all there was a considerable mixture of conceit, ambition, egoism, a petty readiness to take offence, and a very liberal portion of the weaknesses all flesh is heir to. He disliked all who rose above him in the service, and spoke of them in biting, sardonic epigrams. He was particularly severe upon a former colleague whom he regarded as his inferior in intelligence and abilities, although he had risen to a higher grade in the service, and was now governor-general of two provinces, in one of which General Betrishtchev had estates, so that he was in a sense dependent on his rival. In revenge he derided him, criticised every measure he took, and considered everything he said or did as the height of inbecility. In spite of his good heart the general was given to malicious mockery. Altogether he liked to be first, he liked applause and flattery, he liked to shine and to show off his cleverness, he liked to know what other people did not know, and did not like people who knew things he did not know. Though his education had been half foreign he wanted at the same time to play the part of a Russian grand gentleman. With such incongruous elements, with such great and glaring contradictions in his character, he was inevitably bound to meet with a number of unpleasant in-

cidents, in consequence of which he retired from the service. He ascribed this to the intrigues of a hostile party, and had not the magnanimity to blame himself for anything. In retirement he still kept up the same picturesque majestic deportment. Whether he was in his frock-coat, his dress-coat or his dressing-gown, he was always the same. Everything in him, from his voice to his slightest gesture, was commanding, peremptory, and inspired in his inferiors if not respect at least awe.

Tchitchikov was conscious of both feelings, both respect and awe. Inclining his head respectfully on one side, he began as follows: "I thought it my duty to present myself to your Excellency. I cherish the deepest respect for the distinguished men who have saved our country on the field of battle, and I thought it my duty to present myself in person to your Excellency."

The general evidently did not dislike this mode of approach. With a gracious inclination of his head, he said: "Very glad to make your acquaintance. Pray sit down. Where have you served?"

"My career in the service," said Tchitchikov, sitting down, not in the middle of the chair but on the edge of it, with one hand holding on to the arm, "began in the Treasury, your Excellency; I passed the later years of it in various departments: I have been in the Imperial Court department, and on the Buildings Committee and in the Customs. My life may be compared to a vessel in mid-ocean, your Excellency. In suffering, I may say, I was reared, in suffering I was fostered, in suffering I was swaddled and I am, so to say, nothing but an embodiment of suffering. And

what I have endured at the hands of my enemies no words could depict. Now in the evening, so to speak, of my life I am seeking a nook in which to spend the remnant of my days. I am staying for the time with a near neighbour of yours, your Excellency . . ."

"With whom?"

"At Tyentyetnikov's, your Excellency."

The general frowned.

"He deeply regrets, your Excellency, that he did not show fitting respect . . ."

"Respect for what?"

"For the distinguished merits of your Excellency," answered Tchitchikov. "He cannot find words, he does not know how to atone for his conduct. He says: 'If only I could in some way . . .' he says. 'I know how to honour the men who have saved their country. . . .'"

"Upon my soul, what does he mean? . . . Why, I am not angry with him," said the general, mollified. "At heart I have a genuine affection for him, and I am sure that in time he will become a very useful person."

"Most useful," Tchitchikov assented. "He has the gift of words and a ready pen."

"But he writes, I expect, rubbish, trashy verses?"

"No, your Excellency, not rubbish."

"Why not?"

"He is writing . . . a history, your Excellency."

"A history! A history of what?"

"A history . . ." at this point Tchitchikov paused, and either because there was a general sitting before him or to give more importance to the subject, added, "A history of generals, your Excellency."

"Of generals? What generals?"

"All kinds of generals, your Excellency, that is, to be more exact . . . the generals of our country."

"Excuse me, I don't quite understand. . . . How do you mean? Is it the history of some period, or separate biographies, and is it of all Russian generals or only those that took part in the campaign of 1812?"

"That is just it, your Excellency, the history of those that took part in the campaign of 1812."

"Then why does he not come to me? I could give him a great deal of new and very interesting material."

"He does not dare, your Excellency."

"What nonsense! For the sake of a foolish word. . . . I am not at all that sort of person. I am ready to go and call on him myself, if you like."

"He would not think of allowing that, he will come himself," said Tchitchikov, while he thought to himself, "the generals came in pat; though I was gagging away quite at random."

There was a rustling sound. The walnut door of a carved cupboard flew open, and on the further side of the open door, a living figure appeared, clutching with her lovely hand at the handle of the door. If a transparent picture, lighted up by a lamp behind it, had suddenly gleamed upon a dark room, it would not have been so startling as that figure, radiant with life, which seemed to have suddenly appeared to light up the room. It seemed as though a ray of sunlight, suddenly lighting up the ceiling, the cornice and the dark corners, had flown into the room together with her. She seemed to be remarkably tall. But it was an illusion, and was due to her exceptional slenderness and the harmonious symmetry of all parts of her from her head to her finger tips. The dress all of one colour, hastily flung

on, had been flung on with such taste, that it seemed as though the dressmakers of both capitals had consulted together how to attire her to the best advantage. That was an illusion. She made her own dresses and made them anyhow; a piece of uncut material was caught up in two or three places, and it hung and draped round her in such folds, that a sculptor would have at once chiselled them in marble, and young ladies, dressed in the fashion, looked like gaudy dolls beside her. Although her face was almost familiar to Tchitchikov from Andrey Ivanovitch's sketches he stared at her as though he were dazed, and only afterwards realised that she had a defect, that is, a lack of plumpness.

"Let me introduce my spoilt darling," said the general, introducing Tchitchikov. "But I don't know your name and your father's."

"But is there any need to know the name of a man who has done nothing to give it distinction?" said Tchitchikov.

"But still one must know a man's name."

"Pavel Ivanovitch, your Excellency," said Tchitchikov, with a slight inclination of his head to one side.

"Ulinka! Pavel Ivanovitch has just told us a very interesting piece of news. Our neighbour Tyentyetnikov is by no means so stupid as we supposed. He is engaged on rather important work—a history of the generals of the year 1812."

Ulinka seemed at once to fire up and grow eager. "Why, who thought he was stupid?" she said quickly. "Nobody could think such a thing except Vishnepokromov, whom you believe in, papa, though he is an empty-headed and contemptible person!"

"Why is he contemptible? He is an empty-headed fellow, that is true," said the general.

"He is mean and disgusting as well as empty-headed," Ulinka put in hastily. "Any one who could treat his brothers as he did and turn his own sister out of the house is a disgusting person."

"But that is only talk."

"People wouldn't talk for nothing. You are kindness itself, papa, and no one has such a heart, but sometimes you do things that might make any one believe the opposite. You will welcome a man though you know he is bad just because he has a ready tongue and knows how to get round you."

"My love, I could not kick him out," said the general.

"No need to kick him out, but why like him!"

"Well, your Excellency," said Tchitchikov to Ulinka, with a slight inclination of his head and an agreeable smile, "as Christians it is just those we ought to love," and then turning to the general, he said smiling, this time rather slily, "Did you ever hear, your Excellency, of the saying—'Love us dirty, for any one will love us clean'?"

"I have never heard it."

"It is a very interesting anecdote," said Tchitchikov, with a sly smile. "On the estate, your Excellency, of Prince Gukzovsky, whom no doubt your Excellency knows . . ."

"I don't know him."

". . . There was a steward, your Excellency, a young man and a German. He had to go to the town about the levy of recruits and other business, and of course he had to grease the hands of the court officials. They

liked him however and entertained him. So one day when he was at dinner with them, he said: 'Well, gentlemen, I hope one day you will come and see me on the prince's estate.' They said: 'We'll come.' It happened not long afterwards that the court had to conduct an examination on the estate of Count Trehmetyev, whom no doubt your Excellency knows also."

"I don't know him."

"They didn't make the examination, but all the officials of the court betook them to the quarters of the count's steward, an old man, and for three days and three nights they played cards without stopping. The samovar and punch of course were on the table all the time. The old man got sick of them. To get rid of them he said to them: 'You had better go and see the prince's German steward, gentlemen, he lives not far from here.' 'Oh, to be sure,' they said, and half drunk, unshaven as they were and drowsy, they got into a cart and went off to the German's. . . . And the German, I must tell your Excellency, had only just got married; he had married a boarding-school miss, quite young and very genteel—(Tchitchikov expressed her gentility in his face). They were sitting at tea, the two of them, thinking of nothing at all, when the door opened, and the whole crew of them came reeling in."

"I can fancy—a nice set!" said the general laughing.

"The steward was so taken aback that he said: 'What do you want?' 'Ah,' said they, 'so that's your line!' And with that they put on quite a different face and countenance. . . . 'We have come on business! How much spirit is being distilled on the estate? Show us your books.' The German did not know what

to do. They called in witnesses. They bound his arms and took him away to the town, and for a year and a half he lay in prison."

"Upon my soul!" said the general.

Ulinka clasped her hands.

"His wife did all she could," Tchitchikov went on. "But what can an inexperienced young woman do? Luckily some kind people turned up who advised her to settle it amicably. He got off for two thousand roubles and a dinner to the officials. And at the dinner when they were all rather exhilarated, and he also, they said to him—'Aren't you ashamed now of the way you treated us? You wanted us shaven and well got up in our dress-coats: no, you love us dirty, for any one will love us clean.' "

The general went off into a roar of laughter, Ulinka gave a moan of distress.

"I don't understand how you can laugh!" she said quickly. Her lovely brow was darkened by wrath. . . . "It was a most disgraceful action for which they ought all to have been sent, I don't know where. . . ."

"My dear, I don't in the least justify them," said the general, "but what's to be done if it is funny? How did it go? 'Love us clean'? . . ."

"Dirty, your Excellency," Tchitchikov prompted him.

" 'Love us dirty, for any one will love us clean.' Ha, ha, ha, ha!" And the general's huge frame began quivering with laughter. His shoulders which had once worn fringed epaulettes shook as though they were still wearing fringed epaulettes.

Tchitchikov permitted himself also a peal of laughter, but out of respect for the general he pitched it on the

letter *e*: "He, he, he, he, he!" and his frame too began quivering with laughter, though his shoulders did not shake, for they had never worn fringed epaulettes.

"I can fancy what a nice set the unshaven fellows were!" said the general, still laughing.

"Yes, your Excellency, in any case three days sitting up without sleep is like keeping a fast: they were exhausted, they were exhausted, your Excellency," said Tchitchikov still laughing.

Ulinka sank into a low chair and put her hand before her lovely eyes; as though vexed that there was no one who could share her indignation, she said: "I don't know, but it merely makes me angry."

And indeed the feelings in the hearts of the three persons were extremely strange in their incongruity. One was amused by the uncompromising tactlessness of the German; another was amused at the funny trick the rogues had played; the third was distressed that an injustice had been committed with impunity. All that was lacking was a fourth to ponder over these words which aroused laughter in one and sadness in the other. For what is the significance of the fact that even in his degradation, a man besmirched and going to his ruin claims still to be loved? Is it an animal instinct or the faint cry of a soul stifled under the heavy burden of base passions, still breaking through the hardening crust of vileness, still wailing: "Brother, save me!" There was no fourth for whom the ruin of a brother's soul was bitterest of all.

"I don't know," said Ulinka, taking her hands from her face, "all I can say is that it makes me angry."

"Only please don't be angry with us," said the general. "We are not to blame for it. Give me a kiss

and run away, for I am just going to dress for dinner. You'll dine with me of course," said the general, suddenly addressing Tchitchikov.

"If only, your Excellency . . ."

"No ceremony. There will be cabbage soup."

Tchitchikov bowed his head affably, and when he raised it again he did not see Ulinka, she had vanished. A gigantic valet with thick whiskers was standing in her place, holding a silver ewer and basin in his hands.

"You'll allow me to dress before you, won't you?" said the general, flinging off his dressing-gown, and tucking up his shirt sleeves over his heroic arms.

"Upon my word, your Excellency, you may do whatever you like before me," said Tchitchikov.

The general began to wash, snorting and plashing like a duck. Soapy water was flying all over the room.

"How does it go?" he said, rubbing his thick neck from both sides, 'Love us clean . . .' "

"Dirty, your Excellency. 'Love us dirty, for any one will love us clean.' "

"Very good, very."

Tchitchikov was in unusually good spirits, he was conscious of a sort of inspiration. "Your Excellency," he said.

"Well?" said the general.

"There is another story."

"What is it?"

"It's an amusing story too, only it is not amusing for me. So much so indeed that if your Excellency . . ."

"Why, how's that?"

"This is how it is, your Excellency." At this point

Tchitchikov looked round and seeing that the valet with the basin had gone, began as follows: "I have an uncle, a decrepit old man. He has three hundred souls and no heirs except me. He can't look after the estate himself, for he is too feeble, and he won't hand it over to me either. And the reason he gives for not doing so is very queer: 'I don't know my nephew,' he says; 'perhaps he is a spendthrift, let him prove that he is a reliable person, let him get three hundred souls on his own account first, then I'll hand him over my three hundred too.'"

"What a fool!"

"That is a very just observation, your Excellency. But imagine my position now." Here Tchitchikov, dropping his voice, began saying as though it were a secret, "He has a housekeeper, your Excellency, and the housekeeper has children. If I don't look out it will all go to them."

"The silly old man has outlived his wits and that is all about it," said the general. "But I don't see how I can help you."

"What I thought of was this: now until the new census lists are given in, owners of large estates must have accumulated besides their living serfs, a great number who have passed away and died. . . . So, your Excellency, if you were to transfer them to me, just as though they were living, by a regular deed of purchase, I could show the purchase deed to the old man, and he couldn't get out of giving me my inheritance."

At this the general burst into a roar of laughter such as is rarely heard, he rolled into an armchair just as he was, hung his head back and almost choked. The

whole household was alarmed. The valet appeared. His daughter ran into the room in a fright.

"Papa, what has happened to you?"

"Nothing, my dear, ha, ha, ha! Run along, we'll come into dinner directly. Ha, ha, ha!"

And several times after a rest the general's laughter broke out again with renewed violence, resounding from the entrance hall to the furthest room in the general's lofty echoing apartments.

Tchitchikov awaited with some uneasiness the end of this extraordinary mirth.

"Come, my dear fellow, you must excuse me! The devil must have put you up to such a trick! Ha, ha, ha! To humour the old gentleman and to foist dead ones on him. Ha, ha, ha! Your uncle, your uncle! What a fool you will make of him!"

Tchitchikov found himself in a somewhat embarrassing position; facing him stood the valet, with his mouth open and his eyes staring out of his head.

"Your Excellency, what makes you laugh costs me tears," he said.

"Forgive me, my dear fellow! You have nearly been the death of me. Why, I'd give five hundred thousand to see your uncle's face when you show him the deed of purchase for three hundred serfs. But is he very aged? How old is he?"

"Eighty, your Excellency. But it is a private matter. I should be . . ." Tchitchikov looked significantly at the general, and at the same time glanced out of the corner of his eye at the valet.

"You can go, my good man. You can come back presently." The whiskered giant withdrew.

"Yes, your Excellency. . . . It's such a queer business, your Excellency, that I should prefer to keep it quiet. . . ."

"Of course, I quite understand that. What a fool the old man is! To think of such foolishness at eighty years old! What's he like to look at? is he strong and hearty? does he still keep on his legs?"

"He does get about but with difficulty."

"What a fool! Has he got any teeth?"

"He has only two teeth, your Excellency."

"What an ass! You mustn't be vexed at my saying so, you know, but he is an ass!"

"Quite so, your Excellency. Though he is a relation and it is painful to admit it, he certainly is an ass." However, the reader may surmise for himself, the admission was by no means painful to Tchitchikov, especially as it is doubtful whether he ever had an uncle. "So that, if your Excellency would be so kind . . ."

"As to give you my dead souls? Why, for such an idea, I'd give you them land and all! You may take the whole cemetery. Ha, ha, ha, ha! To think of the old man! Ha, ha, ha, ha! What a fool! Ha, ha, ha, ha!" And the general's laugh went echoing through his apartments again.

(*Here there is a gap in the manuscript.*)

CHAPTER III

"NO," thought Tchitchikov, when he found himself once more in the midst of fields and open country, "as soon as I get it all done satisfactorily and really become a man of means and property, I shall not manage things like that. I will have a good cook and a house well provided in every way, but it shall all be managed properly too. I shall make both ends meet and little by little I shall lay by a sum for my children if only, please God, my wife brings me offspring. . . . Hey, you great stupid!"

Selifan and Petrushka both looked round from the box.

"Where are you driving to?"

"Why, as you were pleased to tell us yourself, Pavel Ivanovitch—to Colonel Koshkaryov's," said Selifan.

"And did you inquire the way?"

"Why, Pavel Ivanovitch, as your honour can see for yourself, since I was busy looking after the carriage all the while, well . . . I saw nothing but the general's stable, but Petrushka inquired of the coachman."

"Well, you are a fool! You have been told not to rely upon Petrushka: Petrushka's a blockhead."

"There is nothing very difficult about it," said Petrushka, with a sidelong glance at him, "excepting when we go down hill, we are to keep straight on, there was nothing more at all."

"And excepting brandy I'll be bound you have not put a drop to your lips. And you are drunk now, I shouldn't wonder."

Seeing the turn the conversation was taking, Petrushka simply wrinkled up his nose. He was on the point of saying that he had never touched it, but he felt somehow ashamed to say so.

"It's pleasant driving in the carriage," said Selifan, turning round.

"What's that?"

"I say, Pavel Ivanovitch, it is pleasant for your honour driving in the carriage, it's better than the chaise, it's not so jolting."

"Get on, get on, nobody asked you about that."

Selifan switched the horses' sides and addressed his remarks to Petrushka: "Did you hear, they say this gentleman, Koshkaryov, dresses up his peasants like Germans; you wouldn't know what they were at a distance, they strut along like cranes, just as Germans do. And the women don't tie kerchiefs round their heads like a pie or wear a headband, but some sort of German kapor, as German women, you know, go about in kapors. A kapor, that's what it's called, you know, kapor—it's some sort of German thing, you know, a kapor."

"I should like to see you dressed up like a German and in a kapor!" said Petrushka, by way of a gibe at Selifan, and he grinned. But a queer face he made when he grinned! And there was not the slightest semblance of a grin, he looked like a man who has caught a bad cold and is trying to sneeze but cannot sneeze, and remains with a fixed expression of trying to sneeze.

Tchitchikov looked up into his face from below to

see what was going on and said to himself: "He is a pretty fellow and thinks he is handsome too!" Pavel Ivanovitch, it must be explained, was genuinely convinced that Petrushka was in love with his own looks, though as a matter of fact the latter at times completely forgot that he had a face at all.

"You ought, Pavel Ivanovitch," said Selifan, turning round from the box, "to have thought to ask Andrey Ivanovitch to give you another horse in exchange for the dappled grey here; he is so friendly disposed to you he wouldn't have refused you, and this horse is simply a rascally beast, and only a hindrance."

"Get on, get on, don't chatter," said Tchitchikov, while he thought to himself, "Yes, it really is a pity I didn't think of it."

The lightly moving carriage raced along easily meanwhile. It ran lightly up the hills, though the road was rough in parts, and lightly down hill, though there were steep descents in the cross roads. They were going down hill. The road passed by meadows, across bends of the river, by water mills. In the distance there were glimpses of sand; one aspen copse stood out picturesquely behind another; close beside them willow bushes, alders and silver poplars flew rapidly by, hitting Selifan and Petrushka in the face with their twigs. They were continually knocking off the latter's cap. The surly servant clambered down from the box, swore at the stupid tree and the man who had planted it, but never thought to tie his cap on or even to keep hold of it, hoping all the while that perhaps it might not happen again. As they went on, the trees were more numerous and closer together. Here there were birch-trees as well as aspens and alders, and soon they were in a regular forest. The sunlight was hid-

den. There were dark pines and fir-trees. The impenetrable darkness of the boundless forest grew thicker and seemed turning into the blackness of night. And all at once between the trees the light glittered here and there like quicksilver or looking-glass through the trunks and branches. The forest began to grow lighter, the trees were more scattered, they heard shouts and all at once a lake lay before them. There was an expanse of water three miles across, with trees around it and huts behind it. Some twenty men up to their waists, their shoulders, or their throats in the water were dragging a net towards the opposite bank. In the midst of them a man almost as broad as he was long, perfectly round, a regular watermelon, was swimming rapidly, shouting and giving orders to every one. He was so fat that he could not under any circumstances have drowned, and however he had tumbled and turned trying to dive the water would have always borne him on the surface; and if a couple of men had set on his back he would have remained floating like an obstinate bubble, though he might have snorted a bit and blown bubbles from his mouth and nose.

"Pavel Ivanovitch," said Selifan, turning round on the box, "that must be Colonel Koshkaryov."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because his body's whiter than the others, and he is more corpulent and dignified, like a gentleman."

The shouts meanwhile were becoming more distinct. The watermelon gentleman was shouting rapidly in a ringing voice:

"Hand it to Kozma, Denis, hand it to him, Kozma, take the tail from Denis. Big Foma, shove there where Little Foma is. Keep to the right, keep to the

right. Stay, stay, the devil take you both! You've caught me round the navel. You have tangled me in it, I tell you, confound you, you have caught me in it!"

Those who were dragging on the right side of the net stopped, seeing that an unforeseen accident had occurred: their master was caught in the net.

"I say," said Selifan to Petrushka, "they have caught their master like a fish."

The gentleman floundered about and trying to disentangle himself, turned on his back, belly upwards, and became more entangled than ever. Afraid of breaking the net he swam together with the fish that had been caught, telling them to tie a cord round him. Tying him with the cord they flung the end of it on to the bank. Some twenty fishermen standing on the bank caught hold of the end and began carefully hauling it in. When he reached shallow water the gentleman stood up, covered with the meshes of the net like a lady's hand covered with her openwork summer glove, glanced upwards and caught sight of the visitor driving along the dam in the carriage. Seeing a visitor he nodded to him. Tchitchikov took off his cap and politely bowed from the carriage.

"Have you dined?" shouted the gentleman, scrambling with the fish on to the bank, holding one hand over his eyes to shield them from the sun, the other in the attitude of the Medici Venus stepping out of the bath.

"No," said Tchitchikov.

"Well, you may thank God then."

"Oh why?" asked Tchitchikov with curiosity, holding his cap above his head.

"Why, look at this," said the gentleman, who stood

on the bank together with the carp and crucians which were struggling at his feet and leaping up a yard from the ground. "These are nothing, don't look at these, that is the prize over there, yonder. Show the sturgeon, Big Foma." Two sturdy peasants pulled a monster out of a tub. "Isn't he a little prince? we have got him out of the river."

"Yes, that is a regular prince!" said Tchitchikov.

"To be sure he is. You drive on ahead and I will follow you. Coachman, you take the lower road through the kitchen garden, my man. You run, Little Foma, you booby, and take down the barrier, and I'll be with you in a trice, before you have time to look round."

"The colonel's a queer fish," thought Tchitchikov, as after driving across the endless dam he approached the huts, of which some were scattered about the slope of the hillside like a flock of ducks, while others stood below on piles like herons. Creels, nets and fishing tackle were hung about everywhere. Little Foma removed the barrier, the carriage drove through the kitchen garden, and came out into an open space near an ancient wooden church. A little further, beyond the church, the roofs of the manor house and its outbuildings could be seen.

"Well, here I am again," cried a voice from one side. Tchitchikov looked round and saw that the stout gentleman was already driving in a droshky beside him, clothed—a grass-green nankeen coat, yellow breeches, and a bare neck without a cravat like a Cupid. He was sitting sideways on the droshky, which he completely filled. Tchitchikov was about to say something to him, but the fat man had already vanished. The droshky appeared on the other side and the

voice rang out again: "Take the pike and the seven crucians to my booby the cook, but hand me the sturgeon here; I'll take it myself on the droshky." Again there were shouts: "Big Foma and Little Foma, Kozma and Denis!"

When Tchitchikov drove up to the front door, to his intense astonishment the fat gentleman was already on the steps, and received him with open arms. It was inconceivable how he could have managed to fly there in the time. They kissed each other three times, first on one cheek and then on the other.

"I have brought you greetings from his Excellency," said Tchitchikov.

"From what Excellency?"

"From your kinsman, from the General Alexandr Dimitrievitch."

"Who is Alexandr Dimitrievitch?"

"General Betrishtchev," answered Tchitchikov, with some surprise.

"I don't know him, he is a stranger."

Tchitchikov was still more astonished.

"How's that? I hope anyway I have the pleasure of addressing Colonel Koshkaryov?"

"Pyotr Petrovitch Pyetuh," the stout gentleman caught him up.

Tchitchikov was dumfounded.

"Well, upon my soul! What have you done, you fools?" he said, turning to Selifan, who was sitting on the box and Petrushka, who was standing at the carriage door, both with their mouths wide open and their eyes starting out of their heads with astonishment. "What have you done, you fools? You were told Colonel Koshkaryov's . . . and this is Pyotr Petrovitch Pyetuh!"

"The fellows have done splendidly," said Pyotr Petrovitch. "I'll give you each a mug of vodka for it and a fish pasty into the bargain. Take out the horses and run along at once to the servants' quarters!"

"I am really ashamed," said Tchitchikov, bowing. "Such an unexpected mistake."

"Not a mistake," Pyotr Petrovitch Pyetuh declared eagerly, "it is not a mistake. You try what the dinner's like first and then say whether it is a mistake. Pray come in," he said, taking Tchitchikov's arm, and leading him into the inner rooms.

Tchitchikov from politeness went in at the door sideways so as to allow the master of the house to pass in with him; but this courtesy was thrown away, the stout gentleman could not have got through the door with him, moreover he had already disappeared, he could only hear his remarks in the yard.

"Why, what's Big Foma about? Why isn't he here yet? Emelyan, you sluggard, run to booby the cook and tell him to make haste and stuff the sturgeon. Put the soft roe and the hard roe, the insides and the bream into the soup, and the crucians into the sauce. And the crayfish, the crayfish! Little Foma, you sluggard, where are the crayfish? The crayfish, I say the crayfish?" And for a long time afterwards he still heard shouts "Crayfish, crayfish."

"Well, the master of the house is busy," said Tchitchikov, sitting in an easy-chair, and looking round at the walls and corners.

"Here I am again," said the fat gentleman, coming in and bringing two lads in light summer coats, as slender as willow bands and almost a full yard taller than Pyotr Petrovitch.

"My sons, high-school boys, they are home for the holidays. Nikolasha, you stay with the visitor, and you, Alexasha, follow me." And Pyotr Petrovitch Pyetuh disappeared again.

Tchitchikov was entertained by Nikolasha. The lad was talkative. He told him that they were not very well taught at their high-school, that the teachers favoured those whose mammas sent the richest presents, that there was a regiment of the Inkermanlandsky Hussars stationed in the town; that Captain Vyetvitsky had a better horse than the colonel himself, though Lieutenant Vzyomtsev rode far better than he did.

"And tell me in what condition is your father's estate?" Tchitchikov asked.

"It's mortgaged," the father himself replied, reappearing again in the drawing-room, "It's mortgaged."

Tchitchikov felt inclined to make that movement of the lips which a man makes when a thing is no good, and is ending in nothing.

"Why did you mortgage it?" he asked.

"Oh, no particular reason; everybody goes in for mortgaging nowadays, so why shouldn't I do the same as the rest? They tell me it's profitable. Besides I have always lived here, so I may as well try living in Moscow."

"The fool, the fool!" thought Tchitchikov, " he will spend everything and make his children spendthrifts too. You had better stay at home in the country, you fish pie."

"I know what you are thinking," said Pyetuh.

"What?" asked Tchitchikov, embarrassed.

"You are thinking, 'He is a fool, he is a fool, this Pyetuh! He has invited me to dinner and there is no dinner all this time.' It will soon be ready, my good

sir, in less time than it takes a cropped wench to plait her hair, it will be here."

"Father, Platon Mihailitch is coming," said Alexasha, looking out of the window.

"On a roan horse," Nikolasha put in, stooping down to the window. "Do you think it's a better horse than our grey, Alexasha?"

"Better, no, but its paces are different."

A dispute sprung up between them about the merits of the roan and the grey. Meanwhile a handsome man of graceful figure, with fair shining curls and dark eyes, walked into the room. A ferocious-looking dog with powerful jaws came in behind him, jingling its copper collar.

"Have you dined?" asked the fat man.

"Yes, I have," said the visitor.

"Why, have you come to make fun of me or what?" said Pyetuh, getting angry. "What do I want with you after dinner?"

"Well, Pyotr Petrovitch," said the visitor smiling, "I can assure you I ate nothing at dinner, if that's any comfort."

"Such a catch we have had, you should have seen it. Such a monstrous sturgeon was landed, and there was no counting the carp."

"It makes me envious to hear you," said the visitor. "Do teach me to enjoy myself as you do."

"But why be dull? Upon my soul!" said the fat gentleman.

"Why be dull? Because it is dull."

"You don't eat enough, that is all. You should just try having a proper dinner. It's a new fashion they have invented, being bored; in old days no one was bored."

"Don't go on boasting! Do you mean to say you have never been bored?"

"Never! And I don't know how it is, but I have not time to be bored. One wakes up in the morning—one has to have one's morning tea, you know, and then there is the steward to see, and then I go fishing and then it is dinner-time; after dinner you have hardly time for a snooze before supper's here, and after that the cook comes up—I have to order dinner for to-morrow. When could I be bored?"

All the while he was talking, Tchitchikov was looking at the visitor.

Platon Mihailitch Platonov was an Achilles and Paris in one, a graceful figure, picturesque height, freshness—everything was combined in him. A pleasant smile with a faint expression of irony, as it were, accentuated his beauty, but, in spite of all that, there was something lifeless and drowsy about him. No passions, no sorrows, no agitations had traced lines on his virginal fresh face, but the absence of them left him lifeless.

"I must confess," Tchitchikov pronounced, "I too cannot understand how with an appearance like yours —if you will allow me to say so—you can be bored. Of course there may be other reasons—lack of money or vexations due to evil-minded persons, for indeed there are some such as are ready to attempt one's life."

"But the point is that there is nothing of the sort," said Platonov. "Would you believe it that sometimes I could wish that it were so, that I had some anxiety and trouble, well, even for instance that some one would make me angry, but no, I am bored and that is all about it!"

"I don't understand it, but perhaps your estate is insufficient and you have only a small number of souls?"

"Oh no. My brother and I have thirty thousand acres of land and a thousand souls of peasants on them."

"And with all that to be bored, it is incomprehensible! But perhaps your estate is in disorder? Perhaps your crops have failed, or a great many of your serfs have died?"

"No, on the contrary, everything is in the best of order and my brother is an excellent manager."

"I don't understand it," said Tchitchikov, and shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, we'll drive away his boredom directly," said their host. "Run quickly to the kitchen, Alexasha, and tell the cook to send in the fish pies as soon as she can. But where's that sluggard Emelyan and that thief Antoshka? Why don't they bring the savouries?"

But the door opened. The sluggard Emelyan and the thief Antoshka made their appearance with table napkins, laid the table, set a tray with six decanters of various coloured homemade wines; soon round the trays and decanters there was a necklace of plates—caviare, cheese, salted mushrooms of different kinds, and something was brought in from the kitchen covered with a plate, under which could be heard the hissing of butter. The sluggard Emelyan and the thief Antoshka were quick and excellent fellows. Their master gave them those titles because to address them without nicknames seemed tame and flat, and he did not like anything to be so; he was a kind-hearted man,

but liked to use words of strong flavour. His servants did not resent it, however.

The savouries were followed by dinner. The good-hearted fat gentleman showed himself now a regular ruffian. As soon as he saw one piece on a visitor's plate he would put a second piece beside it, saying: "It is not good for man or bird to live alone." If the visitor finished the two pieces, he would foist a third on him, saying: "What's the good of two, God loves a trinity." If the guest devoured all three he would say: "Where's the cart with three wheels? Who built a three-cornered hut?" For four he had another saying and for five, too.

Tchitchikov ate nearly a dozen slices of something and thought: "Well, our host won't force anything more upon me." But he was wrong, without a word the master of the house laid upon his plate a piece of ribs of veal roasted on a spit, the best piece of all with the kidney, and what veal it was!

"We kept that calf for two years on milk," said the fat gentleman. "I looked after him as if he were my son!"

"I can't," said Tchitchikov.

"You try it, and after that say you can't!"

"It won't go in, there's no room for it."

"Well, you know, there was no room in the church, but when the mayor arrived, room was made; and yet there was such a crush that an apple couldn't have fallen to the floor. You just try it: that morsel's like the mayor."

Tchitchikov did try it, it certainly might be compared with the mayor; room was made for it though it had seemed that it could not have been got in.

It was the same thing with the wines. When he had received the money from the mortgage of his estate Pyotr Petrovitch had laid in a supply of wine for the next ten years. He kept on filling up the glasses; what the guests would not drink he poured out for Alexasha and Nikolasha, who simply tossed off one glass after another, and yet got up from the table as though nothing had happened, as though they had only drunk a glass of water. It was not the same with the visitors. They could hardly drag themselves to the verandah, and were only just able to sink into armchairs; as soon as the master of the house had settled himself in his, an armchair that would have held four, he dropped asleep. His corpulent person was transformed into a blacksmith's bellows: from his open mouth and from his nose he began to emit sounds such as are not found even in the newest music. All the instruments were represented, the drum, the flute, and a strange abrupt note, like the yap of a dog. . . .

"Isn't he whistling!" said Platonov. Tchitchikov laughed.

"Of course if one dines like that," said Platonov, "how can one be bored? one falls asleep."

"Yes," said Tchitchikov languidly. His eyes seemed to be becoming very small. "All the same, if you will forgive my saying so, I can't understand how you can be bored. There are so many things you can do to keep off boredom."

"Such as?"

"Why there are all sorts of things a young man can do! You can dance, you can play some instrument . . . or else you can get married."

"Married! To whom?"

"Surely there must be some attractive and wealthy young ladies in the neighbourhood."

"No, there are not."

"Well, look for them in other places. Go about." At this point a happy thought flashed upon Tchitchikov's brain; his eyes grew wider. "Well, here's a capital remedy," he said, looking into Platonov's face.

"What do you mean?"

"Travel."

"Where could I go?"

"Why if you are free, come with me," said Tchitchikov, and to himself he thought, looking at Platonov, "and that would be a good thing, we could go halves over the expenses; and the repair of the carriage I could put down entirely to him."

"Why, where are you going then?"

"Oh, how shall I say? I am travelling not so much on my own affairs as on other people's. General Betrishtchev, my intimate friend, and I may say my benefactor, has asked me to visit his relations. . . . Of course, relations are all very well, but I am partly travelling on my own account too; for seeing the world and what people are doing, is—say what you like—a book of life, a second education."

Platonov pondered.

Tchitchikov meanwhile reflected: "It really would be a good thing. I might manage that he should undertake all the expenses. I might even so arrange as to set off with his horses, and to leave mine to be kept in his stables, and to take his carriage for the journey."

"Well, why not go for a trip?" Platonov was thinking meanwhile; "maybe it would cheer me up. I

have nothing to do at home, my brother looks after everything as it is; so it would not be disarranging things. After all why shouldn't I amuse myself?"

"And would you agree," he said aloud, "to stay two days at my brother's? He won't let me go without."

"With the greatest pleasure, three if you like."

"In that case here's my hand on it! We'll go," said Platonov, becoming more animated.

"Bravo!" cried Tchitchikov, clapping his hands, "we'll go!"

"Where? where?" asked their host, waking up and staring at them with wide-open eyes. "No, gentlemen, orders have been given for the wheels to be taken off your carriage, and your horse, Platonov Mihailitch, is ten miles away by now. No, tonight you will stay here, and tomorrow you can go home after an early dinner."

"Upon my soul!" thought Tchitchikov. Platonov made no answer, knowing that Pyetuh had his own ways, and could not be turned from them. They had to remain. They were rewarded however by a marvellous spring evening. Their host arranged a row on the river for them. Twelve rowers with twenty-four oars rowed them, to the accompaniment of singing, over the smooth surface of the mirror-like lake. From the lake they were borne along into an immense river with sloping banks on each side. Not an eddy stirred the surface of the water. They had tea too and rolls on the boat, passing continually under ropes stretched across the river for catching fish. Before tea their host undressed and jumped into the water, where he floundered about for half an hour, and made a great noise with the fishermen, shouting to Big Foma and Kozma, and after having shouted and having fussed

about to his heart's content, and got thoroughly chilled in the water, he returned to the boat with an appetite for tea which made the others envious to look at him. Meanwhile the sun had set; the sky remained clear and transparent. There was the sound of shouting. In place of the fishermen there were groups of boys bathing on the banks; splashing and laughter echoed in the distance. The oarsmen after plying their twenty-four oars in unison, suddenly raised them all at once into the air and the long-boat, light as a bird, darted of itself over the motionless, mirror-like surface. A fresh-looking sturdy lad, the third from the stern, began singing in a clear voice; five others caught it up, and the other six joined in and the song flowed on, endless as Russia; and putting their hands to their ears the singers themselves seemed lost in its endlessness. Listening to it one felt free and at ease, and Tchitchikov thought: "Ah, I really shall have a country place of my own one day."

"Oh, what is there fine in that dreary song?" thought Platonov, "it only makes me more depressed than ever."

It was dusk as they returned. In the dark the oars struck the water which no longer reflected the sky. Lights were faintly visible on both sides of the river. The moon rose just as they were touching the bank. On all sides fishermen were boiling soups of perch and still quivering fish on tripods. Everything was at home. The geese, the cows and the goats had been driven home long before, and the very dust raised by them was laid again by now, and the herdsmen who had driven them were standing by the gates waiting for a jug of milk and an invitation to partake of fish soup. Here and there came the sound of talk and the

hum of voices, the loud barking of the dogs of their village and of other villages far away. The moon had risen and had begun to light up the darkness; and at last everything was bathed in light—the lake and the huts; the light of the fires was paler; the smoke from the chimneys could be seen silvery in the moonlight. Alexasha and Nikolasha flew by them, racing after each other on spirited horses; they raised as much dust as a flock of sheep.

"Oh, I really will have an estate of my own one day!" thought Tchitchikov. A buxom wife and little Tchitchikovs rose before his imagination again. Whose heart would not have been warmed by such an evening!

At supper they over-ate themselves again. When Pavel Ivanovitch had retired to the room assigned to him, and had got into bed, he felt his stomach: "It's as tight as a drum!" he said; "no mayor could possibly get in." As luck would have it, his host's room was the other side of the wall, the wall was a thin one and everything that was said was audible. On the pretence of an early lunch he was giving the cook directions for a regular dinner, and what directions! It was enough to give a dead man an appetite. He licked and smacked his lips. There were continually such phrases as: "But roast it well, let it soak well." While the cook kept saying in a thin high voice: "Yes sir, I can, I can do that too."

"And make a four-cornered fish pasty; in one corner put a sturgeon's cheeks and the jelly from its back, in another put buckwheat mush, mushrooms and onions and sweet roe, and brains and something else—you know . . ."

"Yes sir, I can do it like that."

"And let it be just a little coloured on one side, you know, and let it be a little less done on the other. And bake the underpart, you understand, that it may be all crumbling, all soaked in juice, so that it will melt in the mouth like snow."

"Confound him," thought Tchitchikov, turning over on the other side, "he won't let me sleep."

"Make me a haggis and put a piece of ice in the middle, so that it may swell up properly. And let the garnishing for the sturgeon be rich. Garnish it with crayfish and little fried fish, with a stuffing of little smelts, add fine mince, horse radish and mushrooms and turnips, and carrots and beans, and is there any other root?"

"I might put in kohlrabi and beetroot cut in stars." said the cook.

"Yes, put in kohlrabi, and beetroot, and I'll tell you what garnish to serve with the roast . . ."

"I shall never get to sleep," said Tchitchikov. Turning over on the other side, he buried his head in the pillow and pulled the quilt up over it, that he might hear nothing, but through the quilt he heard unceasingly: "And roast it well," and "Bake it thoroughly." He fell asleep over a turkey.

Next day the guests over-ate themselves to such a degree, that Platonov could not ride home; his horse was taken back by one of Pyetuh's stable boys. They got into the carriage: Platonov's dog Yarb followed the carriage lazily, he too, had over-eaten himself.

"No, it is really too much," said Tchitchikov, as soon as the carriage had driven out of the yard. "It's positively piggish. Aren't you uncomfortable, Platon Mi-

hailitch? The carriage was so very comfortable and now it seems uncomfortable all at once. Petrushka, I suppose you have been stupidly rearranging the luggage? There seem to be baskets sticking up everywhere!"

Platonov laughed. "I can explain that," he said, "Pyotr Petrovitch stuffed them in for the journey."

"To be sure," said Petrushka, turning round from the box. "I was told to put them all in the carriage—pasties and pies."

"Yes indeed, Pavel Ivanovitch," said Selifan, looking round from the box in high good humour. "A most worthy gentleman, and most hospitable! He sent us out a glass of champagne each, and bade them let us have the dishes from the table, very fine dishes, most delicate flavour. There never was such a worthy gentleman."

"You see he has satisfied every one," said Platonov. "But tell me truly, can you spare the time to go out of your way to a village some seven or eight miles from here? I should like to say good-bye to my sister and my brother-in-law."

"I should be delighted," said Tchitchikov.

"You will not be the loser by doing so; my brother-in-law is a very remarkable man."

"In what way?" asked Tchitchikov.

"He is the best manager that has ever been seen in Russia. It's only a little more than ten years since he bought a neglected estate for which he gave barely twenty thousand, and he has brought it into such a condition that now he gets two hundred thousand from it."

"What a splendid man! The life of a man like that

ought to be held up as an example to others. It will be very, very agreeable to make his acquaintance. And what's his name?"

"Skudronzhoglo."

"And his Christian name and father's name?"

"Konstantin Fyodorovitch."

"Konstantin Fyodorovitch Skudronzhoglo. Very agreeable to make his acquaintance. One may learn something from knowing such a man." And Tchitchikov proceeded to ask questions about Skudronzhoglo, and everything he learned about him from Platonov was surprising indeed.

"Look," said Platonov, pointing to the fields, "his land begins here. You will see at once how different it is from other people's. Coachman, here you take the road to the left. Do you see that copse of young trees? They were all sown. On another man's land they wouldn't have been that height in fifty years, and they have grown up in eight. Look, there the forest ends and the cornfields begin, and in another one hundred and fifty acres there will be forest again, also raised from seed, and then cornland again. Look at the corn, how much heavier it is than anywhere else."

"Yes, I see. But how does he do it?"

"Well, you must ask him that. There is nothing he hasn't got. He knows everything, you would never find another man like him. It is not only that he understands what soil suits anything, he knows what ought to be next to what, what grain must be sown near which kind of trees. With all of us the land is cracking through the drought, but his land is not. He calculates how much moisture is needed and plants trees accordingly: with him everything serves two purposes,

the forest is timber, and it also improves the fields by its leaves and its shade."

"A wonderful man!" said Tchitchikov, and he looked with curiosity at the fields.

Everything was in extraordinarily good order. The forest was fenced in; there were cattleyards, also with good reason enclosed and admirably kept up; the stacks of corn were gigantic. There was abundance and fertility on every side. It could be seen at once that here there was a prince among managers. Going a little up hill they saw a big village facing them, scattered upon three hillsides. Everything in it was prosperous; the roads were well made; the huts were solid; if a cart was standing anywhere, that cart was new and strong; if they met a horse the horse looked well fed and spirited. The horned cattle also looked picked specimens, even a peasant's pig had the air of a nobleman. It was evident that here were living those peasants who dig silver with their spades as the song says. There were here no English parks, no arbours, no bridges, nothing fantastic, no landscape gardening. From the huts to the big house stretched a row of fishermen's yards. On the roof was a watch tower, not for the sake of the view, but to see how and where the work was going on.

They drove up to the house. The master was not at home; they were met by his wife, Platonov's sister, fair-haired, white-skinned, with a specially Russian expression, as handsome but also as listless as he. It seemed as though she cared little for the things that were most cared for, either because the all-devouring activity at her side left nothing for her to do, or because by her very nature she belonged to that

class of philosophical people, who, having feelings and intelligence only, as it were, half alive, look at life with their eyes half closed and seeing its fierce struggle and agitation, say: "Let them rave, the fools! So much the worse for them."

"Good-day, sister," said Platonov. "Where is Konstantin?"

"I don't know, he ought to have been here long ago. No doubt he has been kept by something."

Tchitchikov took little notice of the lady of the house. He was interested in looking at the habitation of this remarkable man. He scrutinised everything in the room; he expected to find traces of its owner's character, as from the shell one can judge what the oyster or the snail that lived in it was like; but there was nothing of the sort. The room was absolutely characterless, it was spacious and nothing else. There were no pictures or frescoes on the walls, nor bronzes on the tables, no what-nots with china and cups on them, no vases, no flowers, no statues—in fact it was somewhat bare, there was simple furniture, and a piano standing on one side, and even that was shut, evidently the lady of the house did not often sit down to it. A door opened from the drawing-room into the master's study, but there too it was as bare—simple and bare. It could be seen that the master of the house came home only to rest and not to live in it, that he did not need a study with well-upholstered easy-chairs and all the comforts in order to think over his plans and ideas, and that his life was not spent in seductive dreams by a glowing fireside but in actual work: his ideas sprang at once from the circumstance itself, at the moment when it arose, and passed at once into action without any need of written records.

"Ah, here he is. Here he comes!" cried Platonov. Tchitchikov too rushed to the window. A man of about forty, with a swarthy face and alert appearance, walked up to the steps. He had on a serge cap. Two men of a lower class were walking with their caps in their hands, one on each side of him, talking and discussing something with him. One appeared to be a simple peasant, the other in a blue Siberian coat, seemed to be a close-fisted and knavish dealer who had come to buy something.

"So you'll bid them take it, sir," said the peasant, bowing.

"No, my good man, I have said to you twenty times already: don't bring any more, I have so much material already that I don't know where to put it."

"But it all turns to profit with you, Konstantin Fyodorovitch. One couldn't find another man as clever anywhere. Your honour will find a place for everything. So do bid them take it."

"I need hands; get me workmen, not material."

"But you wouldn't have any lack of workmen either. All our village goes out to work: no one remembers our being so short of bread as now. It's only a pity you won't take us on altogether, we'd serve you well and truly, by God we would. One can learn the way to do everything from you, Konstantin Fyodorovitch. So bid them take it for the last time."

"But last time you said it was the last time, and here you have brought the stuff again."

"But this is for the last time, Konstantin Fyodorovitch. If you won't take it no one will. So do tell them to take it, sir."

"Well, listen, this time I will take it, but I am only

taking it because I am sorry for you, and don't want you to have it carted here for nothing. But if you bring me any more, I won't take it, not if you go on worrying me for three weeks."

"Certainly, Konstantin Fyodorovitch; you may be sure I won't bring any more. I most humbly thank you." The peasant walked away gratified. He was lying however, he would bring some more: "try your luck" is a saying of great power.

"Then be so good, Konstantin Fyodorovitch, . . . make it a little less," said the travelling merchant in the blue Siberian coat, who was walking on the other side of him.

"Why, I told you my price at first, I am not fond of bargaining. I tell you again: I am not like other landowners to whom you go just the day the interest is due on their mortgage. I know you well. You have a list of them and put down when each has to pay his interest. He is pressed for money and he will sell at half price. But what's your money to me? For all I care my things can lie unsold three years; I have no interest to pay."

"That's the fact, Konstantin Fyodorovitch. But you know I only . . . so that I may have dealings with you in the future and not from greed. Take three thousand as deposit." The dealer took out of the bosom of his coat a bundle of greasy notes.

Skudronzhoglo took it coolly, and without counting them, thrust them into the back pocket of his coat.

"H'm," thought Tchitchikov, "just as though it were a pocket handkerchief."

A minute later Skudronzhoglo appeared at the door of the drawing-room.

"Hullo, brother, you here?" he said on seeing Platonov. They embraced and kissed each other. Platonov introduced Tchitchikov. Tchitchikov went reverently towards him, kissed him on the cheek and received an imprint of a kiss from him.

Skudronzhoglo's face was very striking. It betrayed its southern origin. His hair and his eyebrows were thick and dark, his eyes were speaking and of intense brilliance. Every expression of his face was sparkling with intelligence, and there was nothing drowsy about him. But an element of something choleric and irritable could be detected. He was not of pure Russian descent. There are in Russia numbers of Russians not of Russian descent, but quite Russians at heart. Skudronzhoglo took no interest in his origin, thinking that it made no practical difference, and he knew no language but Russian.

"Do you know, Konstantin, what I am thinking of?" said Platonov.

"Why what?"

"I have thought of going for a driving tour in several provinces, perhaps it would cure me of my depression."

"Well, very likely it will."

"In company with Pavel Ivanovitch here."

"Excellent. What districts," asked Skudronzhoglo, addressing Tchitchikov cordially, "do you purpose visiting now?"

"I must own," said Tchitchikov, putting his head on one side and grasping the arm of his chair, "for the moment I am not travelling so much on my own affairs as upon somebody else's. General Betrishtchev, my intimate friend, and I may say my benefactor, asked me

to visit his relations. Relations of course are relations, but to some extent I may say I am going on my own account, for apart from the benefit that may accrue from the point of view of the digestion, the mere fact of seeing the world and what people are doing . . . say what you will, is a living book, a second education."

"Yes, to have a look at different places is not a bad thing."

"Your observation is most just," replied Tchitchikov, "it certainly is not a bad thing. You see things that otherwise you would not see, and meet people you would not otherwise meet. Talk with some people is as precious as gold. Teach me, honoured Konstantin Fyodorovitch, teach me, I appeal to you. I await your precious words as heavenly manna."

Skudronzhoglo was embarrassed. "But what, teach you what? I have had a very second-rate education myself."

"Wisdom, honoured sir, wisdom! The wisdom that will enable me to manage an estate as you do, and like you to succeed in making it yield a revenue not in dreams but in real fact; to obtain like you, possessions that are not visionary, but are real and actual, and so performing the duty of a citizen to win the respect of my countrymen."

"Do you know what?" said Skudronzhoglo, "stay a day here with me. I will show you all my work and tell you all about it. There is no particular wisdom about it as you will see."

"Brother, do stay for the day," said Madame Skudronzhoglo, turning to Platonov.

"I don't mind," said the latter indifferently, "what does Pavel Ivanovitch say?"

"I shall be delighted. . . . But there is one point. . . . I must pay a visit to General Betrishtchev's relations. There is a certain Colonel Koshkaryov . . ."

"But don't you know that he is a fool, a madman?"

"I have heard that; I have nothing to do with him. But since General Betrishtchev is my intimate friend, and so to say my benefactor . . . it would be awkward not to go."

"In that case," said Skudronzhoglo, "do you know what you had better do? drive over to him now. I have a racing droshky standing ready. It's not more than seven miles to his place, so you will be there in no time. You will be back before supper in fact."

Tchitchikov gladly availed himself of this suggestion. The droshky was brought round, and he drove off at once to see the colonel, who amazed him more than any one he had seen before. Everything at the colonel's was unusual. The whole village was upside down; building, rebuilding, heaps of mortar, bricks, and beams were about all the streets. Some houses were planned like government buildings. On one was inscribed in golden letters: "Depot for Agricultural Implements," on another, "Principal Counting House," on the third, "Committee of Rural Affairs," "School of Normal Education for Villagers"; in fact there was no telling what there was. He wondered whether he had not driven into the district town. The colonel himself was a rather stiff individual. His face was somewhat prim-looking and of the shape of a triangle. The whiskers were drawn stiffly down each cheek, his hair, his nose, his lip and his chin all looked as though they had been kept under a press. He began talking like a sensible man. From the first word he

began complaining of the lack of culture among the surrounding landowners, of the great difficulties that lay before him. He received Tchitchikov cordially and affably, and quite took him into his confidence, describing with self-complacency what immense labour it had cost him to bring his estate into its present prosperous condition: how difficult it was to make the simple peasant understand that there are higher pleasures which enlightened luxury provides for man, that there is such a thing as art; how necessary it was to struggle with the ignorance of the Russian peasant, to dress him in German breeches and to make him at least to some extent sensible of the higher dignity of man; that in spite of all his efforts he had, so far, been unable to make the peasant women put on corsets, while in Germany, where he had stayed with his regiment in 1814, a miller's daughter could even play on the piano, speak French and make a curtsey. He deplored the terrible lack of culture of the neighbouring landowners, telling him how little they thought about their subjects; how they even laughed when he tried to explain how necessary for the management of an estate it was to establish a secretary's office, counting houses and even committees, so as to prevent all sorts of stealing, and so that everything should be known; that the clerk, the steward and the book-keeper ought not to be educated just anyhow, but ought to complete their studies at the university, that in spite of all his persuasions he could not convince the landowners of the benefit it would be to their estates if every peasant were so well educated that he could read a treatise on lightning conductors while following the plough.

Upon this, Tchitchikov reflected, "Well I doubt if

there'll ever be such a time. Here I have learnt to read and write but I haven't finished reading the Countess de la Vallière, yet."

"The ignorance is awful," Colonel Koshkaryov said in conclusion, "the darkness of the Middle Ages, and there is no possibility of remedying it, believe me there is not! Yet I could remedy it all; I know the one means, the certain means of doing so."

"What is that?"

"To dress all, every one in Russia, as they are in Germany. Do absolutely nothing but that and I warrant you all will go swimmingly; the level of education will rise, trade will improve, the golden age will come to Russia."

Tchitchikov looked at him intently and thought: "Well, it's no use standing on ceremony with him." Without putting things off he informed the colonel on the spot that he was in need of certain souls with the completion of purchase and all the formalities.

"As far as I can see from your words this is a request, isn't it?"

"Yes, certainly."

"In that case put it in writing, it will go to the committee for all sorts of petitions. The committee for all sorts of petitions, after making a note of it, will bring it to me. From me it will go to the committee for rural affairs, there they will make all sorts of inquiries and investigations concerning the business. The head steward together with the counting-house clerks will pass their resolution in the shortest possible time and the business will be completed."

Tchitchikov was aghast. "Excuse me," he said, "like that it will take a long time."

"Ah!" said the colonel with a smile, "that is just the advantage of doing everything on paper. It takes a little time certainly, but on the other hand nothing escapes notice, every detail will be seen."

"But excuse me. . . . How can one treat of this in writing! You see, it is rather a peculiar business . . . the souls are . . . you see . . . in a certain sense . . . dead."

"Very good. So you write then that the souls are in a certain sense dead."

"But how can I write dead? One can't write it like that, you know, though they are dead, they must seem as though they are alive."

"Very good. So you write then: 'But it is necessary or it is required, that it should seem as though they are alive.' "

What was to be done with the colonel? Tchitchikov decided to go himself and see what these various boards and committees were like, and what he found was not merely astonishing, but was really beyond all conception. The committee for all sorts of petitions existed only on its signboard. The president of it, a former valet, had been transferred to the newly formed Board of Rural Affairs. His place was filled by the counting-house clerk, Timoshka, who had been dispatched to make an inquiry—to settle a dispute between a drunken clerk and the village elder, who was a rogue and a thief. There were no officials anywhere.

"But where is one to go then? How is one to get at anything sensible?" said Tchitchikov to his companion, a clerk for special commissions, whom the colonel had sent to escort him.

"You won't get any sense anywhere," said his escort,

"it's all at sixes and sevens. Everything among us is managed, you see, by the Committee of Rural Construction, they take every one from his work and send him where they like. The only ones who are well off are those who are on the Committee of Construction (he was evidently displeased with the Committee of Construction). What happens here is that every one leads the master by the nose. He thinks that everything is as it should be, but it's all only in name."

"I must tell him that, though," thought Tchitchikov, and on getting back to the colonel, he told him that everything was in a muddle, and that there was no making head or tail of it, and the Committee was stealing right and left.

The colonel boiled over with righteous indignation; he immediately wrote off eight severe inquiries: on what grounds the Committee of Construction without authorisation disposed of officials who were not in their department? How could the chief steward allow the president to go off to an investigation without giving up his post? And how can the Board of Rural Affairs see with indifference that the Committee for All Sorts of Petitions doesn't even exist?

"Now there will be a fine to-do," thought Tchitchikov, and he began to take his leave.

"No, I am not going to let you go. In two hours at the utmost you will be satisfied about everything. I will put your business into the hands of a special man who has only just finished his studies at the university. Sit down in my library. Here there is everything you can want, books, papers, pens, and pencils—everything. Make use of them, make use of everything, you are master."

So said the colonel as he opened the door into his

library. It was an immense apartment, the walls of which were lined with books from the floor to the ceiling. There were even stuffed animals in it. There were books on every subject—on forestry, cattle-rearing, pig-breeding, gardening, thousands of all sorts of magazines, handbooks and masses of journals representing the very latest development and perfection in horse breeding and the natural sciences. There were titles such as *Pig-breeding as a Science*. Seeing that these were all subjects that did not offer an agreeable way of passing the time, he turned to other bookcases. It was out of the frying-pan into the fire: there all the books were on philosophy. The title of one was *Philosophy as a Science*. There were six volumes in a row, entitled *Preliminary Introduction to the Theory of Thought in its General Aspect as a whole, and in its Application to the Interpretation of the Organic Principles of the Mutual Distribution of Social Productivity*. Wherever Tchitchikov opened the book, on every page he found "phenomenon," "development," "abstract," "cohesion" and "combination"; and the devil only knows what. "No, all that's not in my line," thought Tchitchikov, and he turned to the third bookcase, where all the books related to art. Here he pulled out a huge volume of somewhat free mythological pictures, and began looking at them. That was to his taste. Middle-aged bachelors always like such pictures. It is said that of late years old gentlemen have acquired a taste for them excited by the ballet. There is no help for it. Man is fond of spices. When he had finished looking through this book Tchitchikov was about to pull out another of the same class, when Colonel Koshkaryov made his appearance with a beaming face, holding a paper in his hand.

"It is all finished and finished admirably. That man really does understand, he is the one that makes up for all the rest. For this I'll promote him above all the rest: I'll make a special board of control and make him president of it. This is what he writes . . ."

"Well, thank the Lord," thought Tchitchikov, and prepared to listen.

"'In reference to the commission that your honour has entrusted to me I have the honour herewith to report as follows: 1. In the very petition of the collegiate councillor and cavalier, Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov, there is some misunderstanding: inasmuch as souls are required that have been assailed by various sudden calamities, and died. Thereby, doubtless, he signifies those on the point of death, not actually dead; seeing that the dead cannot be obtained. How can a thing be purchased if it does not exist. Logic itself tells us that and evidently the gentleman has not gone very far in the study of the humanities.'" Here for a moment Koshkaryov stopped and said: "In this passage the rogue certainly scores off you. But he has a smart pen, hasn't he, and yet he has only been three years at the university, in fact he did not finish his education.'" Koshkaryov continued: "'He has not gone far, as is evident, in the study of the humanities . . . for he has used the expression "dead souls," while every one who has completed a course of humane studies, knows for a fact that the soul is immortal. 2. Of the aforementioned souls, acquired by purchase or otherwise, or, as the gentleman incorrectly expresses it, dead, there are none that have not only been mortgaged, seeing that all without exception have been not only mortgaged but re-mortgaged for an ad-

ditional hundred and fifty roubles a soul, except the little village of "Gurmailovka," which is in a doubtful position owing to the lawsuit with the landowner, Predishtchev, and so cannot be sold or mortgaged.' "

"Then why did you not tell me before? Why have you delayed me over these trifles?" said Tchitchikov angrily.

"Why, how could I tell that at first? That's the advantage of putting everything on paper, that everything now is perfectly clear."

"You are a fool, a silly ass," thought Tchitchikov to himself. "He has rummaged about in books, but what has he learned?" Regardless of all the rules of propriety and politeness, he seized his cap and rushed out of the house. The coachman was standing with the racing droshky in readiness: feeding them would have involved a petition in writing, and the resolution to give the horses oats would only have arrived next day. Rude and uncivil as Tchitchikov was, Koshkaryov was nevertheless courteous and refined. He shook his hand warmly and pressed it to his heart (just as Tchitchikov was getting on to the droshky) and thanked him for having given him an opportunity of seeing the working of his system in practice, that he certainly must give them a severe reprimand, for everything was apt to be slack and the springs of the rural mechanism to grow rusty and weak; that in consequence of this incident the happy thought had occurred to him to establish a new committee, which would be called the Committee for the Supervision of the Committee of Construction, so that then no one would dare to steal.

"Ass! fool!" thought Tchitchikov, feeling angry and out of humour all the way back. He drove back by

starlight. Night had come on. There were lights in the villages. When he arrived at the steps he saw through the windows that the table was already laid for supper.

"Why are you so late?" asked Skudronzhoglo, when he appeared at the door.

"What have you been discussing with him for so long?" asked Platonov.

"He bored me to death!" said Tchitchikov. "I have never seen such a fool in my life."

"Oh! that's nothing," said Skudronzhoglo. "Koshkaryov is a comforting phenomenon. He is of use because the follies of the intellectual people are reflected and caricatured in him and so are more apparent. They have set up offices, counting-houses and directors and works and factories, and schools and committees, and the devil only knows what, as though they had got an empire to govern! How do you like this, I ask you? A landowner has arable land and not enough peasants to work it, and he goes and sets up a candle factory; he gets candlemakers from London and goes into the trade! Then there is another fool better still: he sets up a silk factory."

"Well, but you have factories too," observed Platonov.

"But who set them up? They started themselves: the wool accumulated and I had nowhere to get rid of it, so I began weaving cloth, and stout plain cloth too; it is bought freely at my market here at a low price. The refuse from fish was flung on my bank for six years together; well, what was I to do with it? I began making glue of it and get forty thousand for it. Everything is like that with me, you know."

"What a devil!" thought Tchitchikov, looking him

full in the face. "What a paw for raking in the roubles."

"And I don't build edifices for it; I have no grand buildings with columns and façades. I don't send abroad for workmen, and I don't take the peasant off the land for any consideration; all my hands are men who came for the sake of bread in a famine year. I have lots of such factory workers. Only look carefully after the management and you'll see that every rag may be turned to account, every bit of refuse may yield a profit, so that at last you can only reject it and say, I want no more."

"That's amazing," said Tchitchikov, full of interest: "amazing! amazing! What's most amazing is that every bit of refuse yields a profit."

"H'm, but that's not all." Skudronzhoglo did not finish his sentence; his spleen was rising and he wanted to abuse the neighbouring landowners. "There's another clever fellow, what do you suppose he has started? Alms-houses, brick buildings in the village. An act of Christian charity! . . . If you want to help, help every peasant to do his duty, and don't turn him away from his Christian duty. Help the son to keep his father comfortable in his own home, and don't help him to throw off his responsibility. Give him the possibility of sheltering his brother or his neighbour in his own house, give him money to do that, help him as much as you can, but don't separate him, or he will throw off every Christian duty. There are Don Quixotes simply in every direction. . . . Every man in the alms-houses costs two hundred roubles a year! . . . Why, I could keep ten men in the village for that." Skudronzhoglo spat with anger.

Tchitchikov was not interested in alms-houses: he

wanted to turn the conversation on the way in which every bit of refuse yielded an income. But Skudronzhoglo was thoroughly roused by now, his spleen was excited, and his words flowed freely.

"And here another Don Quixote of enlightenment has founded a school. Well, what can be more useful for a man than to know how to read or write? But this is how he manages things. The peasants from his village come to me, 'What's the meaning of this, sir?' they say, 'our sons have got completely out of hand, they won't help us on the land, they all want to be clerks, but you know there is only one clerk wanted.' So that's what it comes to."

Tchitchikov had no use for schools either, but Platonov took up the subject.

"But one must not be stopped by the fact that clerks are not wanted now; there will be a need for them hereafter. We must work for posterity."

"Oh, brother, do you at least be sensible; what do you want with that posterity? Every one seems to think that he is Peter the Great. But you look at what's under your feet, and don't gaze away at posterity; work to make the peasant competent and well off, and to let him have leisure to study as he likes instead of saying to him, stick in hand: 'Learn!' They begin at the wrong end! . . . Here, listen; come, I ask you to judge. . . ." At this point Skudronzhoglo moved closer to Tchitchikov, and to make him attend more closely to the matter, took possession of him, or, in other words, put his finger through the buttonhole of his coat. "Come, what could be clearer. You have peasants in order that you may protect them in their peasant existence. And what does it consist of? What is the peasant's occupation? Grow-

ing corn. So you must try and make him a good husbandman. Is that clear? There are wiseacres who say: 'We can raise him out of that condition. He leads too coarse and simple an existence. We must make him acquainted with objects of luxury.' It is not enough for them that through this luxury they have themselves become rags instead of men, and the devil only knows what diseases they have contracted from it, and now there is not a wretched boy of eighteen who hasn't tried everything and has lost all his teeth and is bald,—and so now they want to infect the peasants too. But thank God we have one healthy class left which hasn't got to know these vices. For that we ought simply to thank God. Yes, the man who tills the land is to my mind more worthy of honour than any. God grant that we may all be tillers of the land."

"So you think that growing corn is the most profitable occupation?" inquired Tchitchikov.

"It's the most righteous, but that's not to say it is the most profitable. 'Till the land in the sweat of thy brow'—that is said to all of us, that's not said in vain. The experience of ages has shown that it is in the agricultural class that morals are purest. Where agriculture is the basis of the social structure, there is abundance and plenty. There is neither poverty nor luxury, but there is plenty. 'Till the land, labour,' man has been told. . . . What could be plainer? I say to the peasant: 'For whomever you are working, whether it is for me, for yourself, or for a neighbour—work. I'll be the first to help you in what you want to do. If you haven't cattle, here's a horse for you, here's a cow for you, here's a cart. I am ready to provide you with whatever you need, but work.

It breaks my heart if your land is neglected and I see disorder and poverty in your household, I can't endure idleness: I am over you to make you work.' H'm, they think to increase their income by setting up factories and institutions of all sorts. But you ought first to think of making every one of your peasants well off, for then you'll be well off yourself without any factories or works and without foolish whims."

"The more I listen to you, honoured Konstantin Fyodorovitch," said Tchitchikov, "the greater my desire to listen; tell me, my honoured friend, if for instance I formed a design to become a landowner, in this province, let us suppose, what ought I to turn my attention to chiefly, what am I to do, how am I to set to work to get rich as quickly as possible, thereby fulfilling the duty of a citizen to my country."

"How set to work to get rich? Why, I'll tell you . . ." said Skudronzhoglo.

"It's supper-time," said the lady of the house, getting up from the sofa, stepping into the middle of the room, and wrapping her chilled young limbs in a shawl.

Tchitchikov leaped up from his chair with the agility of a military man; he flew up to the lady with a soft expression, with the politeness of a refined civilian made his arm into a loop, offered it to her and led her in state across two rooms to the dining-room, keeping his head agreeably on one side all the time. The servant took the cover off the soup tureen; they all moved their chairs nearer to the table and began upon the soup.

When he had finished his soup and drunk a glass of

home-made cordial (it was excellent cordial), Tchitchikov said to Skudronzhoglo: "Allow me, honoured sir, to bring you back to the point at which our conversation broke off. I was asking you: what to do, how to proceed, how best to set to work. . . ."

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(*Two pages of the manuscript are missing here.*)

"If he asked forty thousand for the estate I would pay it him down on the spot."

"H'm!" Tchitchikov pondered. "Then why don't you buy it yourself?" he brought out with some diffidence.

"Well, one must know one's limits. I have a great deal to do with my own estates without that. As it is, the gentry of the neighbourhood are all crying out against me, declaring that I take advantage of their difficulties and their ruined position, buying up land for a song. I am sick of it at last."

"Country gentlemen are fond of backbiting," said Tchitchikov.

"Yes, especially among us in our province. . . . You can't imagine what they say about me. They never speak of me except as the skinflint and a money-grubber of the worst kind. They don't blame themselves for anything. 'I have run through my money of course,' they say, 'but that's because I had higher needs. I must have books. I must live luxuriously to encourage trade; one needn't be ruined if one lived the life of a pig like Skudronzhoglo.' You see that's how they go on."

"I should like to be such a pig," said Tchitchikov.

"And you know all that's because I don't give dinners, and don't lend them money. I don't give din-

ners because it would bore me, I am not used to them; but if you like to come and see me and eat what I eat, you are very welcome! That I won't lend money is nonsense. If you come to me really in want and tell me your circumstances and what use you will make of my money, if I see from your words that you'll make a sensible use of it and that it will be of some real benefit to you—I would not refuse you, and would not even take the interest. But I am not going to throw my money away. No, you must excuse me! He'll give a dinner to his mistress, or furnish his house on an insane scale, and I'm to lend him the money! . . ."

Here Skudronzhoglo spat and was almost uttering some unseemly and violent language in the presence of his wife. A shade of gloomy melancholy darkened his lively face. Lines that betrayed the wrathful ferment of his rising spleen furrowed his brow vertically and horizontally.

Tchitchikov emptied a glass of raspberry cordial and said: "Allow me, my honoured friend, to bring you back again to the point where our conversation broke off. Supposing I were to obtain the estate to which you kindly referred, how long a time or how quickly could I grow as rich as——"

"If you want to grow rich quickly," Skudronzhoglo caught him up suddenly and abruptly, for he was still full of ill-humour, "you'll never get rich at all: if you want to get rich without caring how long it takes, you'll get rich quickly."

"You don't say so!" said Tchitchikov.

"Yes," said Skudronzhoglo abruptly, as though he had been angry with Tchitchikov himself. "You

must have a love for the work: without that you can do nothing. You must like farming. Yes! and believe me it is anything but dull. They have got up an idea that it is depressing in the country . . . but I should die of depression if I had to spend one day in town as they spend their time. A farmer has no time to be bored. There is no emptiness in his life, it is all fullness. You have only to look at the varied round of the year's work—and what work! Work that does truly elevate the spirit, to say nothing of its variety. In it a man goes hand in hand with nature, with the seasons of the year, and is in touch and in sympathy with everything that is done in creation. Before the spring is here our labours are already beginning: there is carting and getting in timber, and while the roads are impassable, there is the getting ready the seed, the sifting and measuring of the corn in the granaries and the drying of it and distributing the tasks among the peasants. As soon as the snows and floods are over, work begins in earnest; by the river there is loading the boats, then there is thinning trees in the wood and planting trees in the garden, and in every direction the men are turning up the ground. The spade is at work in the vegetable garden, the ploughs and harrows in the fields. And the sowing begins—that's a trifling matter of course: they are sowing the future harvest! When summer has come there's the mowing, the husbandman's first holiday—that's a trifling matter too! One harvest comes after the other, after the rye the wheat, after the barley the oats, and then the pulling of the hemp. They throw the hay into cocks, they build the stacks. And when August is half over there is the carting of it all to the

threshing barns. Autumn comes, there is the ploughing and the sowing of the winter corn, the repair of the granaries, the barns and the cattle-sheds, sampling the corn, and the first threshing. Winter comes and even then work does not flag: the first wagon-loads setting off for the town, threshing in all the barns, the carting of the threshed grain from the barns to the granaries; in the woods the chopping and sawing of timber, the carting of bricks and materials for the building in the spring. Why, I am simply incapable of dealing with it all. Such variety of work! One goes here and there to look: to the mill, to the workyard, and to the factory and to the threshing floor; you go to have a look at the peasants, too, how they are working for themselves—that's a trifling matter, too, I suppose! But it's a festival for me to see a carpenter using his axe well; I could stand for a couple of hours watching him, the work delights me so. And if you see too with what object all this is created, how everything around you is multiplying and multiplying, bringing fruit and revenue, why, I can't tell you what a pleasure it is. And not because your money's growing—money is only money—but because it is all the work of your hands; because you see that you are in a way the cause and creator of it all, and you, like some magician, are scattering abundance and welfare on every side. Where will you find me a delight equal to that?" said Skudronzhoglo, and he looked up; all the lines in his face had vanished. He beamed like a triumphant emperor on the day of his coronation. "Why, you couldn't find anything so delightful in the whole world! It's in this, just in this, that a man imitates God. God chose for Himself the work

of creation as the highest delight, and requires the same of man, that he should be the creator of prosperity and the harmonious order of things. And they call that dull work!"

Tchitchikov drank in the sweet sound of his host's words like the singing of a bird of paradise. His mouth positively watered. His eyes shone with sugary sweetness, and he could have listened for ever.

"Konstantin, it is time to get up," said his wife, getting up from the table. Platonov rose, Skudronzhoglo got up, Tchitchikov got up, though he would have liked to go on sitting still and listening. Making a loop of his arm, Tchitchikov led the lady of the house back. But his head was not ingratiatingly on one side and there was not the same sprightly politeness in his movements. His mind was absorbed in more substantial movements and considerations.

"You can say what you like, but it is dull all the same," said Platonov, who was walking behind them.

"Our visitor seems quite a sensible fellow," thought Skudronzhoglo, "and not a boastful fool." And upon this reflection he became still more cheerful, as though his own talk had warmed him up, as though he were delighted at having found a man capable of taking good advice.

Afterwards when they were all settled in a snug little room lighted by candles, facing a big glass door into the garden, Tchitchikov felt happier than he had for a very long time, as though after long wandering he had been welcomed home, and to crown it all had gained the object of his desires, and had flung away his pilgrim's staff, saying: "Enough!" Such was the enchanting state of mind induced in him by his

host's sensible words. There are for every heart certain words which are nearer and more akin than any others; and often in some remote, forgotten, out-of-the-way place, in some lonely nook, we unexpectedly meet a man whose warming discourse makes us forget the hardships of the road, the comfortless night lodging and the contemporary world, full of the follies of mankind, and of deceptions that cloud men's vision; and an evening spent in that manner remains with us for ever, and a distinct memory is kept of everything that happened in it, who was present, and at what spot each person was standing, and what was in his hand—the walls, the corners, and every trifle in the room.

So Tchitchikov noticed everything that evening: the little plainly furnished room, and the good-natured expression on the face of his clever host, and the pipe with the amber mouthpiece that was handed to Platonov, and the smoke which he blew in Yarb's broad face and Yarb's snorting, and his pretty hostess's laugh, interrupted by the words, "That's enough, don't tease him," and the cheerful candle-light and the cricket in the corner, and the glass door and the spring night which looked in at them from without, over the tops of the trees among which the nightingales were singing.

"Your words are sweet to me, honoured Konstantin Fyodorovitch," Tchitchikov brought out. "I may say that in all Russia I have not met your equal in intelligence."

Skudronzhoglo smiled. "No, Pavel Ivanovitch," he said, "if you want to know an intelligent man, we really have one man whom one might call an intelli-

gent man, and I am not worth the sole of his old shoe."

"Who is that?" Tchitchikov asked with surprise.

"It is our government contractor, Murazov."

"This is the second time I have heard of him."

"He is a man who could administer not merely an estate but a whole kingdom. If I had a kingdom I should immediately make him the minister of finance."

"I have heard it said that he is a man of abilities beyond all belief: he has made ten millions."

"Ten millions, it must be more than forty. Soon half Russia will be in his hands."

"What do you mean?" cried Tchitchikov, amazed.

"It certainly will be. His wealth must be increasing now at a terrible rate. That's evident. A man gets rich slowly if he has a few hundred thousands; but when a man has a million he has a wide range: whatever he takes up is soon doubled and trebled. His field of action is so wide. And he has no rivals in it either: there is no one to compete with him. Whatever price he fixes stands: there is no one to knock it down."

Tchitchikov gazed into Skudronzhoglo's face with his mouth open and his eyes starting out of his head as though he were moonstruck. He held his breath.

"Inconceivable," he said, when he had recovered himself a little, "the mind is petrified with awe. People are amazed at the wisdom of Providence as they scrutinise a beetle; to my mind it is even more overwhelming that such vast sums can find their way into a mortal's hands! Allow me to put a question to you in regard to one point: tell me, all this was surely not obtained in the first place quite honestly, was it?"

"Absolutely irreproachably and by the most straightforward means!"

"I can't believe you, most honoured friend, I really can't believe you. If it were a case of thousands perhaps, but millions . . . no, pardon me, but I can't believe it."

"On the contrary, it is difficult to get thousands honestly, but millions are easily piled up. A millionaire has no need to resort to crooked ways. The road is straight, you have but to go along it and take whatever lies before you. Another man would not pick it up, not every one has the capacity."

"It's incredible! And what is most incredible is, that it all started from a farthing."

"That's how it always is. That's the natural order of things," said Skudronzhoglo. "A man who has been brought up on thousands will never make money; he will have already formed luxurious habits and goodness knows what. One must start from the beginning and not from the middle. One must begin from the bottom, quite from the bottom. It is only there that one gets a thorough knowledge of life and men with whom you have to deal later on. When you have to put up with this and that in your own person, and when you find out that you must take care of the kopecks before you can get to the roubles, and when you have been through all sorts of ups and downs, it does train you and teach you sense, so that you are not likely to make a false move and come to grief in any enterprise. Believe me, that's the truth. One must start from the beginning and not from the middle. If any one were to say to me: 'Give me a hundred thousand and I'll get rich directly,' I shouldn't

believe him; he is counting on luck and not a certainty. One must begin with a farthing."

"In that case I shall get rich," said Tchitchikov, "because I am beginning almost, so to say, from nothing." He meant, of course, his dead souls.

"Konstantin, it is time for Pavel Ivanovitch to rest and sleep," said his wife, "and you keep chattering."

"And you will certainly get rich," said Skudronzhoglo, not heeding his wife. "Rivers and rivers of gold will flow into your hands. You won't know what to do with your income."

Pavel Ivanovitch sat spellbound in the golden realm of mounting visions and daydreams. His thoughts were in a whirl. . . .

"Really, Konstantin, it is time to let Pavel Ivanovitch go to bed."

"Why, what is it? Well, go to bed yourself if you want to," said her husband, and he stopped; there came the loud sound of Platonov's snoring, and after him Yarb snored still more loudly. The far-away tap of the watchman on a sheet of iron had been audible for a long while past. It was past midnight. Skudronzhoglo realised that it really was bedtime. They separated, wishing each other sound sleep, and their wishes were quickly realised.

Only Tchitchikov could not sleep. His thoughts were wide awake. He kept pondering how to become the owner, not of an imaginary, but of a real estate. After his conversation with Skudronzhoglo, everything had become so clear; the possibility of becoming rich seemed so evident, the difficult work of managing an estate seemed to have become so easy and intelligible, and seemed so well suited to his temperament, that he

began to think seriously of obtaining not an imaginary but a real estate. He at once determined with the money he would get by mortgaging the imaginary souls to obtain an estate that would not be imaginary. He already saw himself managing his estate and doing everything as Skudronzhoglo had instructed him, promptly, carefully, introducing nothing new until he had thoroughly mastered everything old, looking into everything with his own eyes, getting to know all his peasantry, rejecting all superfluities, devoting himself to nothing but work, and looking after his land. . . . He had already a foretaste of the delight that he would feel when he had introduced harmonious order, when every part of the organisation was moving briskly and working well together. The work would go merrily, and just as the flour is swiftly ground out of the grain in the mill, it would grind all sorts of rubbish and refuse into ready money. His marvellous host rose before his imagination every moment. He was the first man in all Russia for whom he had felt a personal respect: hitherto he had always respected men either for their high rank in the service, or for their great possessions; simply for his brains he had never respected any man; Skudronzhoglo was the first. Tchitchikov realised that it was useless to talk dead souls with a man like this, and that the very mention of them would be out of place. He was absorbed now by another project—that of buying Hlobuev's estate. He had ten thousand, another ten thousand he purposed borrowing from Skudronzhoglo, since he had said he was ready to help any one who wanted to grow rich and to take up farming. The remaining ten thousand it might be possible to put off paying

till after he had mortgaged the souls. It was not possible yet to mortgage all the souls he had bought, because he had not yet the land on which he must settle them. Though he did assert that he had land in the Kherson province, its existence was somewhat hypothetical. He had proposed to buy the estate in the Kherson province because land was sold there for a mere song, and was even given away on condition that peasants were settled upon it. He thought, too, he ought to make haste to buy what runaway and dead souls any one had left, for the landowners were one after another hurrying to mortgage their estates, and soon there would not be a spot left in Russia that was not mortgaged to the Government. All these ideas one after another filled his mind and prevented him from sleeping. At last slumber, which had, as the saying is, held all the household in its embrace for the last four hours, embraced Tchitchikov also. He slept soundly. . . .

CHAPTER IV

THE next day everything was arranged most successfully. Skudronzhoglo was delighted to lend ten thousand roubles without interest or security, simply upon a signed receipt: so ready was he to help any one on to the way of prosperity. That was not all: he undertook to accompany Tchitchikov to Hlobuev's, in order to look over the latter's estate with him. After a substantial breakfast they set off all three in Pavel Ivanovitch's carriage; Skudronzhoglo's racing droshky followed empty. Yarb ran on ahead, chasing the birds off the road. They did the twelve miles in a little over an hour and a half and then caught sight of a small village with two houses—a big new one that was unfinished and had remained in the rough for many years, and a little old one. They found the owner very untidy and sleepy, as he was only just awake; there was a patch on his coat and holes in his boots.

He was as delighted at their visit as though it were a great piece of good fortune: as though he were seeing brothers from whom he had long been parted.

"Konstantin Fyodorovitch! Platon Mihailovitch!" he cried. "My dear friends, it is good of you to come! Just let me rub my eyes. I really thought no one would ever come and see me again. Every one avoids me like the plague: they think I am going to ask

them to lend me money. Oh, it's hard, it's hard, Konstantin Fyodorovitch! I see that I am to blame for everything. There's no help for it . . . I am living like a pig. Excuse me, gentlemen, for receiving you in such an attire; my boots as you see are in holes. But what will you take? Tell me."

"Please let us come straight to the point. We have come to you on business," said Skudronzhoglo. "Here is a purchaser for you, Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov."

"Sincerely glad to make your acquaintance. Let me shake hands with you."

Tchitchikov gave him both hands.

"I should be delighted, honoured Pavel Ivanovitch, to show you my estate, which is deserving of attention. . . . But, gentlemen, allow me to ask you, have you dined?"

"We have, we have," said Skudronzhoglo, anxious to get off at once.

"In that case, let us start."

Hlobuev picked up his cap. The visitors put on their caps too, and they all set off to look at the estate.

"Come and look at my disorder and neglect," said Hlobuev. "Of course you did well to have your dinner. Would you believe it, Konstantin Fyodorovitch, I haven't a hen in the place—that's what I've come to. I'm behaving like a pig, a regular pig!"

He heaved a deep sigh, and apparently thinking that he would not get much sympathy from Konstantin Fyodorovitch, and that his heart was rather hard, took Platonov's arm and went on ahead with him, pressing closely up to him. Skudronzhoglo and Tchitchikov remained behind and followed them at some distance, arm-in-arm.

"It's hard, Platon Milhailovitch, it is hard," said Hlobuev to Platonov. "You can't imagine how hard it is! No money, no bread, no boots! I should snap my fingers at all that if I were young and alone. But when all these hardships come upon one in old age and with a wife and five children at one's side, one is distressed, one can't help being distressed. . . ."

Platonov felt sorry for him. "Well, if you sell the estate won't that set you right?" he asked.

"Set me right indeed," said Hlobuev, with a gesture of despair. "It will all go to pay pressing debts, and I shan't have a single thousand left for myself."

"Well, what will you do then?"

"God knows," said Hlobuev, shrugging his shoulders.

Platonov was amazed. "How is it you are not taking steps to extricate yourself from such a position?"

"What steps could I take?"

"Haven't you any other means?"

"None at all."

"Well, try and get some work, take a post."

"Why, you know I am provincial secretary. What sort of good job could be given me? They would pay me a wretched salary, and you see I have a wife and five children."

"Well, take some private situation. Go in for being a steward."

"Who would trust me with his estates? I have squandered my own."

"Yes, but if one is threatened with hunger and death one must take some steps. I'll ask whether my brother could not get you a place through some one in the town."

"No, Platon Milhailovitch," said Hlobeuv, sighing and pressing his hand warmly, "I am no use for any-

thing now. I have grown decrepit before I am old, and I am paying for my weakness in the past by a pain in my back and rheumatism in my shoulders. What could I do? Why should I plunder the government? Without me there are plenty of men in the government service who are there simply to make money. God forbid that to get myself a salary I should help increase the taxes for the poorer class: it's hard enough for them to live as it is with such masses of blood-suckers. No, Platon Mihailovitch, I'll have nothing to do with them."

"Here's a position," thought Platonov, "it's worse than my ennui!"

Meanwhile Skudronzhoglo and Tchitchikov, walking at a considerable distance behind, were talking together.

"He has neglected the place beyond everything," said Skudronzhoglo. "He has brought his peasants to such poverty! When the cattle plague comes it is no use thinking of what belongs to you. You must sell everything you have to get your peasants cattle so that they shouldn't be left a single day without the means of going on with their work. Now it would take years to reform them; the peasants have grown lazy and taken to drink."

"So it is not very profitable to buy this estate now?" inquired Tchitchikov.

At that point Skudronzhoglo looked at Tchitchikov, as though he would have said: "What an ignoramus you are; must one teach you everything from the A B C?"

"Not profitable? Why, in three years I would get an income of twenty thousand from that estate—that's how unprofitable it is. Ten miles across—is a trifle,

it seems! And the land, look what the land's like! It's all water meadows. I'd sow flax, and for flax alone I'd get five thousand; I'd sow turnip, and get four thousand for turnip. And now look, the rye has come up; it was all self sown. He did not sow any corn, I know that. Why, that estate is worth a hundred and fifty thousand, not forty."

Tchitchikov began to be afraid that Hlobuev might overhear, and so dropped even further behind.

"You see how much land has run to waste," said Skudronzhoglo, beginning to get angry. "If he had only let people know beforehand, some one might have been glad to cultivate it. If he has nothing to plough with, he might dig it up and turn it into a market garden; he would have got something for the vegetables! He has made his peasants sit idle for four years—that's no matter, of course! Why, by that alone you have corrupted them and ruined them for ever; they have grown used to rags and vagrancy!"

Skudronzhoglo spat with anger as he said this, and his features were overshadowed by a cloud of gloom.

"I can't stay here any longer: it makes me ill to see this neglect and waste. You can settle with him without me now. Get this treasure away from that fool as soon as you can. He simply dishonours God's gifts." Saying this Skudronzhoglo said good-bye to Tchitchikov, and overtaking Hlobuev, began saying good-bye to him too.

"Upon my word, Konstantin Fyodorovitch," cried Hlobuev in astonishment, "you have only just come and you are going!"

"I can't stay, it is very urgent for me to be at home," said Skudronzhoglo, and taking leave, got on his racing droshky and went off.

It seemed as though Hlobuev understood the reason of his departure. "Konstantin Fyodorovitch couldn't endure it," he said. "I feel that it can't be cheering for a farmer such as he is, to look at such senseless mismanagement. Would you believe it, Pavel Ivanovitch, that I cannot, that I am not able . . . that I have hardly sown any wheat at all this year! As I am an honest man I had no seed, let alone the fact that I have nothing to plough with. Your brother is an extraordinary manager I am told, Platon Mihailovitch; but Konstantin Fyodorovitch, there is no denying it, is a Napoleon in that line. I often think indeed: 'Why is it that there is so much sense in one head? if only there were one drop of it in my silly brain, just enough to know how to manage my household.' I don't know how to do anything: I am no use for anything. Oh, Pavel Ivanovitch, take my land under your care. I feel most sorry for my poor peasants, I feel that I am incapable. . . . I don't know how to be strict and exacting. And, indeed, how could I train them in order and regularity when I am so disorderly and irregular myself. I should like to give them all their freedom at once, but a Russian's so made that he can't do without a purchaser. . . . As he drowses so he drowns."

"Why, that is really strange," said Platonov. "Why is it in Russia that if you don't look sharply after the peasant he becomes a drunkard and good-for-nothing?"

"From lack of culture," said Tchitchikov.

"Well, God knows why. Here we are cultured, and see how we live. I have been to the university and have listened to lectures on all sorts of subjects, but I did not learn the art and right way of living, and what's more I did, so to say, learn the art of spend-

ing money on all sorts of new refinements and comforts, and became more familiar with the objects for which money is necessary. Was that because I did not study sensibly? No, my comrades were all the same. Two or three of them perhaps did get real benefit from the lectures and that was perhaps because they were intelligent anyway, but the others did nothing but try to learn what spoils health and wastes money. Yes, indeed! They came to the lectures simply to applaud the professors, to bestow laurels upon them, and not to gain anything from them, so that we take from culture only its worst side; we snatch at the surface of it, but don't take the thing itself. No, Pavel Ivanovitch, it's from some other cause that we don't know how to live, but what it is, upon my word I don't know."

"There must be a cause," said Tchitchikov.

Poor Hlobuev heaved a deep sigh and said: "It sometimes seems to me that the Russian is a lost man. He has no strength of will, no courage to persevere. One wants to do everything and one can do nothing, one is always thinking that from to-morrow one will begin a new life, that from to-morrow one will set to work as one ought, that from to-morrow one will put oneself on a diet; but not a bit of it, on the evening of that very day one will over-eat oneself, so that one can only blink one's eyes and can't say a word—yes really; and it's always like that."

"One must keep a store of common sense," said Tchitchikov, "and consult one's common sense at every minute, have a friendly conversation with it."

"Well!" said Hlobuev. "Really it seems to me that we are not created for common sense. I don't believe any one of us is sensible. If I do see that some one is

actually living respectably and making and saving money I don't trust even him: the devil will confound him in his old age, he will suddenly let it all go! And every one is like that among us, the gentry and the peasants, the cultured and the uncultured. There was a clever peasant who, starting from nothing, made a hundred thousand, and when he had made a hundred thousand he took a silly craze into his head to have a bath of champagne, and he did bathe in champagne. But now I believe we have looked over everything. There is nothing more. I don't know whether you would like to look at the mill. It has no wheel, though, and its works are good for nothing."

"What's the use of looking at it then?" said Tchitchikov.

"In that case let us go home."

And they all turned their steps homeward.

The sights that met them on their way back were of the same nature. Slovenliness and disorder seemed to show their ugliness on every side. Everything was neglected and had run to waste. An angry peasant woman in greasy rags was beating a poor little girl till the child was half dead, and was calling on all the devils. One philosophic bearded peasant gazed out of window with stoical indifference at the wrath of the drunken woman; another bearded one was yawning. Another was scratching the lower part of his back, while yet another yawned. Yawning was visible in the buildings and in everything: the roofs too gaped. Platonov looking at them gave a yawn. "My future property—the peasants," thought Tchitchikov, "hole upon hole, and patch upon patch."

And in fact a whole gate had been put bodily on the

top of one hut instead of a roof; the falling windows were propped up with beams dragged out of the master's barn. Indeed, the system of Trishka's coat seemed to prevail; the cuffs and the tails were cut off to patch the elbows.

They went indoors. Tchitchikov was somewhat surprised by the mingling of poverty with some splendid nicknacks of the latest fashion in luxury. In the middle of broken ornaments and furniture there were new bronzes. A Shakespeare sat on the inkstand, an ivory hand for scratching the back lay on the table. Hlobuev introduced his wife. She was a fine specimen; she could have held her own in Moscow. She was tastefully and fashionably dressed. She liked talking about the town and the theatre that was being set up in it. It was evident that she liked the country even less than her husband did, and that she yawned more even than Platonov when she was left alone. The room was soon filled with children, charming girls and boys. There were five of them, the sixth was still a baby in arms. They were all delightful: the boys and girls were a joy to look at. They were dressed prettily and with taste, they were full of play and gaiety, and that made it all the sadder to look at them. It would have been better if they had been badly dressed, in simple homespun skirts and smocks, if they had been running about the yard and had been in no way different from the peasant children! A friend came to call on the lady of the house. The ladies went off to their own domain. The children ran after them and the gentlemen were left alone.

Tchitchikov approached the subject of the purchase. Like all purchasers he began depreciating the estate he wanted to buy, and after running it down on all

sides, said: "What price are you asking for it?"

"You see," said Hlobuev, " I don't ask too much and I don't like to do so: it would be shameful on my part. I won't conceal from you either that on my estate out of every hundred souls reckoned on the census list only fifty are left, the rest have either died of an epidemic or have run away without a passport, so that you may reckon them as dead. So I only ask you thirty thousand."

"Oh, thirty thousand! A neglected estate, dead peasants and thirty thousand! Take twenty-five."

"Pavel Ivanovitch, I could mortgage it for twenty-five thousand: do you understand that? Then I should get twenty-five thousand and the estate would still be mine. I am selling it simply because I need money at once, and there would be a lot of delay over mortgaging it; I should have to pay the clerks, and I haven't the money to do it."

"Oh well, but you might let me have it for twenty-five thousand!"

Platonov felt ashamed of Tchitchikov. "Buy it, Pavel Ivanovitch," he said. "Any one would give that price for the estate. If you won't give thirty thousand for it my brother and I will club together and buy it."

Tchitchikov was frightened. "Very well," he said, "I will give thirty thousand. Here I will give you a deposit of two thousand at once, eight thousand in a week's time, and the remaining twenty thousand in a month."

"No, Pavel Ivanovitch, I only sell it on condition of receiving the money as soon as possible. Give me now fifteen thousand at least, and the rest not later than in a fortnight's time."

"But I haven't got fifteen thousand! Ten thousand is all I have with me now. Let me get the money together." This was a lie: he had twenty thousand.

"No, please, Pavel Ivanovitch! I tell you that I absolutely must have fifteen thousand at once."

"But I really have not got the five thousand and I don't know where to get it."

"I will lend it to you," put in Platonov.

"Well, perhaps, if you will!" said Tchitchikov, and thought to himself, "well, it really is very handy that he should lend it me: in that case it will be possible to bring the money tomorrow."

The writing-case was brought from the carriage for Hlobuev, and ten thousand was at once taken from it; the other five thousand was promised for the next day. It was promised, but Tchitchikov inwardly proposed to bring three thousand; the rest later, in two or three days, or if possible to put off the payment somewhat longer. Pavel Ivanovitch had a peculiar dislike for letting money go out of his hands. If it were absolutely inevitable to make a payment it still seemed to him better to pay the money tomorrow and not today. In fact he behaved as we all do: we all like to keep a man dangling about when he is asking for his money. Let him hang about in the passage! As though he could not wait a little! What does it matter to us that every hour may be precious to him and that his business is suffering from his absence!

"Come tomorrow, my good man," we say. "I have no time to attend to you today."

"Where are you going to live?" Platonov asked Hlobuev. "Have you some other estate?"

"No, I haven't, but I am going to move to the

town. I should have had to do that in any case, not on my own account, but for the children. They must have teachers for scripture, music, and dancing. You can't get that in the country, you know."

"Hasn't a crust of bread, but wants his children to be taught dancing!" thought Tchitchikov.

"Queer!" thought Platonov.

"Well, we must have something to sprinkle the bargain with," said Hlobuev. "Hey, Kiryushka! bring us a bottle of champagne, my lad."

"Hasn't a crust of bread, but has champagne!" thought Tchitchikov.

Platonov did not know what to think.

The champagne was brought in. They drank three glasses each and grew livelier. Hlobuev unbent and became clever and charming; witticisms and anecdotes were continually dropping from him. Much knowledge of men and the world was apparent in his talk! He had seen many things so well and so truly; he sketched in a few words the neighbouring landowners so aptly and smartly; he saw the failings and mistakes of all of them so clearly; he knew so well the history of the spendthrift gentry—and why and how and through what they had come to ruin; he could reproduce their most trifling habits with such originality and insight, that they were both fascinated by his talk and were prepared to declare that he was a very intelligent man.

"Listen," said Platonov, taking him by the hand, "how is it that with your cleverness, your experience, and your knowledge of life, you can't find some way of escape from your difficult position?"

"But I can," answered Hlobuev, and thereupon he

poured out a perfect avalanche of projects. They were all so absurd, so odd, and were so little the result of a knowledge of men and the world that there was nothing for it but to shrug one's shoulders and say: "Good Lord, what a fathomless gulf there is between knowledge of the world and the capacity for making use of it!" Almost all his projects rested upon the possibility of obtaining at once by some means a hundred or even two hundred thousand roubles. Then, so he fancied, everything could be settled satisfactorily and the estate would be properly run and the rents would be patched, and the revenues would be quadrupled, and it would be in his power to pay all his debts. And he ended his talk by saying: "But what would you have me do? There isn't any benefactor who would venture to lend me two hundred or even one hundred thousand roubles! It seems it is not God's will."

"As though God would send two hundred thousand roubles to such a fool!" thought Tchitchikov.

"I have got an aunt, indeed, who is worth three million," said Hlobuev, "a devout old lady, she gives to churches and monasteries, but is stingy about helping relations. She is a remarkable old woman—an aunt of the old-fashioned type who is well worth seeing. She has four hundred canaries; she has pug dogs and lady companions and servants such as can't be found sixty, though she always calls to him: 'Hey, boy!' nowadays. The youngest of her servants must be If a visitor does not behave himself, she will tell the servant to leave him out when handing the dishes at dinner. And they actually do miss him out."

Platonov laughed.

"And what is her name, and where does she live?" asked Tchitchikov.

"She lives in our town, Alexandra Ivanovna Hanasarov."

"Why don't you apply to her?" Platonov asked sympathetically. "I think if she were to get a closer insight into the position of your family, she would not be capable of refusing you, however stingy she may be."

"Oh no, she is capable! My aunt has a tough character. She is one of those old women that are like flint, Platon Mihailovitch! Besides there are other people making up to her apart from me. Among them there is one who is aiming at being a governor. He claims to be a relation. God bless him, perhaps he will succeed. God bless the lot of them! I never have been able to make up to people, and less than ever now; I can't stoop to it."

"Idiot!" thought Tchitchikov. "Why, I'd look after an aunt like that like a nurse looking after a baby!"

"Well, talking like this is dry work," said Hlobuev. "Hey, Kiryushka! bring us another bottle of champagne."

"No, no, I can't drink any more," said Platonov.

"Nor can I," said Tchitchikov, and both refused resolutely.

"Well, anyway you must give me your word that you will come and see me in town: on the 8th of June I am giving a little dinner to our local magnates."

"Upon my word!" cried Platonov. "In such a position, completely ruined, and now a dinner-party."

"There's no help for it, it must be: it's a debt," said Hlobuev. "They have entertained me too."

"What is to be done with him?" thought Platonov. He was not aware that in Russia, in Moscow and many other towns, there are numbers of these clever people whose life is an enigma. A man has lost everything it seems, he is in debt all round, he has no means whatever and the dinner he gives, one would think, must be the last; and those who dine with him imagine that next day their host will be hauled off to prison. Ten years pass and he is still extant; he is more deeply in debt than ever, and again he gives a dinner and every one believes it is his last and every one is convinced that their host will be hauled off to prison next day.

Hlobuev was almost one of these wonderful people. It is only in Russia that one can exist in that way. Though he had nothing he entertained and kept open house, and was even a patron of the fine arts, encouraging artists of all sorts who visited the town, giving them board and lodging in his house. If any one had looked into the house he had in town, he could not have told who was the master of it. One day a priest in a chasuble would be holding a service in it; next day some French actors would be having a rehearsal; on one occasion some one who was a complete stranger to almost every one in the house installed himself with his papers in the drawing-room, of all places, and turned it into an office for himself, and no one in the house was troubled by this, but seemed to regard it as in the ordinary course of events. Sometimes for days together there was not a crumb in the house, sometimes they gave a dinner that would have satisfied the most refined gourmand, and the master of the house appeared festive and lively, with the deportment of a wealthy nobleman, and the carriage of a man whose

life has been spent in the midst of plenty and prosperity. On the other hand, at times there were moments so bitter that another man in his place would have hanged or shot himself. But he was saved by a religious temperament which in him was strangely combined with his reckless manner of life. In these bitter painful moments he would turn over the pages of a book and read the lives of the saints and martyrs, who disciplined their souls to be superior to misfortunes and sufferings. His soul at such times completely melted, his spirit was softened and his eyes were filled with tears. And, strange to say, unexpected help almost always came to him from one quarter or another at these times; either some of his old friends would think of him and send him some money; or a wealthy lady, a generous Christian soul, a stranger to him personally, casually heard his story on a visit to the town, and with the impulsive generosity of the female heart, sent him a handsome present; or some law-suit of which he had never even heard would be settled to his advantage. Reverently and gratefully he recognised at such times the incomprehensible mercy of Providence, had a thanksgiving service celebrated, and began the same reckless life as before.

"I am sorry for him, I am really sorry for him!" said Platonov to Tchitchikov, as they were driving away.

"A prodigal son!" said Tchitchikov. "It is no use being sorry for people like that."

And soon they both left off thinking about him: Platonov, because he took an indolent and a pathetic view of every one's position as of everything in the world, indeed. His heart was touched and ached at

the sight of the sufferings of others, but his impressions did not cut deeply into his heart. He did not think of Hlobuev for he did not think even of himself. Tchitchikov did not think of Hlobuev because all his thoughts were absorbed in his new purchase. He was reckoning and calculating and considering all the advantages of the estate he had bought. And however he looked at it, from every point of view he saw that it was a profitable purchase. He might mortgage the estate. Or he might merely mortgage the dead and runaway serfs. Or he might first sell the best pieces of land and then mortgage the remainder. Or he might decide to manage the land himself, and become a landowner after the pattern of Skudronzhoglo, profiting by his advice, as Konstantin Fyodorovitch would be his neighbour and benefactor. Or he might even adopt the course of selling the estate into private hands (always supposing that he did not himself care to undertake the management of it), while keeping the dead and runaway serfs for his own purposes. Then other advantages presented themselves; he might disappear from these parts altogether without repaying Skudronzhoglo the money he had lent him. In fact, however he looked at the matter, it was evident that it was a profitable one. He felt delighted, delighted because he had now become a landowner, an owner not of an imaginary but of a real estate with land and all appurtenances and serfs—serfs not creatures of a dream, existing only in imagination, but real and substantial. And at last he began prancing up and down and rubbing his hands, and humming and murmuring, and putting his fist to his mouth blew a march on it as on a trumpet, and even uttered aloud a few encouraging

words and nicknames addressed to himself, such as "bulldog" and "little cockerel." But then remembering that he was not alone he subsided and tried to suppress his untimely outburst of delight, and when Platonov, mistaking these vague sounds for words addressed to him, asked him, "What?" he answered, "Nothing."

Only then looking about him he noticed that they were driving through a beautiful copse. An enclosure of charming birch-trees stretched to left and to right. Between the trees a white brick church appeared. At the end of the road a gentleman came into sight walking towards them, wearing a cap and carrying a gnarled stick in his hand. A long-legged English hound was running ahead of him.

"Stop!" cried Platonov to the coachman, and he jumped out of the carriage. Tchitchikov did the same. They walked to meet the gentleman. Yarb had already succeeded in greeting the English dog who was evidently an old acquaintance, for he received on his thick nose the eager licking of Azor (that was the name of the English dog) with complete indifference. The agile dog called Azor, after licking Yarb ran up to Platonov and jumped up with the intention of licking him on the lips, but did not succeed in doing so and, repulsed by him, bounded off to Tchitchikov and licking his ear, dashed back to Platonov again, hoping to lick at least his ear.

Platonov and the gentleman coming towards them met at this moment and kissed each other.

"Upon my word, Platon! What do you mean by treating me like this?" the gentleman asked quickly.

"Like what?" Platonov answered apathetically.

"Why, it's too bad really! For three days there

has been no sight or sound of you! Pyetuh's groom brought your horse. 'He has driven away with a gentleman,' he said. But he didn't say a word as to where, with what object, or for how long. Upon my word, brother, how can you go on like this? Goodness knows what I have been imagining these days!"

"Well, I can't help it. I forgot," said Platonov. "We went to see Konstantin Fyodorovitch. He sends you his greetings and so does sister. Let me introduce Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov. Pavel Ivanovitch, brother Vassily: I beg you to like him as you do me."

"Brother Vassily" and Tchitchikov taking off their caps kissed each other.

"What sort of man is this Tchitchikov?" thought "brother Vassily." "Brother Platon is not very discriminating in his acquaintances, and probably has not found out what sort of a man he is." He scrutinised Tchitchikov so far as was consistent with good manners. Meanwhile Tchitchikov stood with his head a little on one side, and maintained an agreeable expression on his countenance.

Tchitchikov for his part scrutinised "brother Vassily" so far as good manners would permit. He was shorter than Platonov, had darker hair, and was altogether far less handsome; but there was a great deal of life and animation in his face. It was evident that he did not spend his time in lethargy and depression.

"Do you know what I am going to do?" said Platonov.

"What?" asked Vassily.

"Going for a tour about holy Russia with Pavel Ivanovitch here, and perhaps it will rouse me and distract me from my depression."

"How did you come to settle it so quickly?" Vassily was beginning, genuinely puzzled at such a decision, and he was almost adding: "And settled to go too with a man you have never seen before, who may be a rascal, and goodness knows what!" And filled with mistrust he looked askance at Tchitchikov, and saw that he was still standing with perfect decorum, still politely holding his head a little on one side and still maintaining the respectfully affable expression on his face, so that it was impossible to say what kind of a man he was.

In silence the three gentlemen walked along the road, on the left of which was the white church of which they had caught glimpses between the trees, and on the right, the buildings of a gentleman's homestead began to come into sight through the trees. At last the gates too came into view. They walked into the yard where there was an old-fashioned high-roofed house. Two immense lime-trees standing in the middle of the yard wrapped almost half of it in their shade. The walls of the house could scarcely be seen through their luxuriant drooping branches. Under the lime-trees there were several long seats. Vassily Platonov asked Tchitchikov to sit down. Tchitchikov sat down and so did the younger brother. The whole yard was flooded with the fragrance of flowering lilacs and bird-cherries, which hanging over the pretty birch hedge from the garden on all sides into the yard looked like a flowery chain or a bead necklace wreathed about it.

A smart deft youth of seventeen in a handsome pink cotton shirt brought a decanter of water and bottles of kvass of various kinds and colours, fizzing like effervescent lemonade. After setting the decanters before

them he went up to a tree and, picking up a spade that was leaning against it, went off into the garden. At the Platonovs' all the house serfs worked in the garden, all the servants were gardeners, or to put it more correctly, there were no servants, but the gardeners sometimes performed their duties. Vassily Platonov always maintained that one could do without servants at all: any one, he said, could hand things, and it was not necessary to have a separate class of people to do it; and that a Russian is only nice and alert and handsome and unconstrained and works well so long as he wears a shirt and jerkin, but that as soon as he gets into a German coat he becomes ungainly and ugly and lazy and dawdling. He even declared that the peasants' cleanliness was only preserved so long as they wore the Russian shirt and jerkin, and that as soon as they got into a German coat they gave up changing their shirts and going to the bath, and took to sleeping in their coats and that bugs, fleas and God knows what besides began to breed under their coats. Perhaps he was right in this. In their villages the peasants dressed with peculiar neatness and smartness, and one might have looked far to find such handsome shirts and jerkins.

"Won't you take a little refreshment?" said Vassily Mihailovitch to Tchitchikov, indicating the decanters. "The kvass is our own make; our house has long been famous for it."

Tchitchikov poured out a glass from the first decanter. It was like the effervescent beverage he had sometimes drunk in Poland, fizzing like champagne, and the gas mounted with an agreeable stinging sensation from the mouth into the nose. "Nectar," said

Tchitchikov. He drank a glass from another decanter, it was better still.

"In what direction and into what parts do you propose to make your tour?" asked Vassily Mihailovitch.

"I am going," said Tchitchikov, rubbing his knee with his hand, while he gently swayed his whole person and leaned his head affably on one side, "not so much on my own affairs as on other people's. General Betrishtchev, my intimate friend, and I may say benefactor, asked me to visit his relations. Relations of course are relations, but in a sense I am going for my own sake too—since apart from the advantages from the point of view of digestion—to see the world and what people are doing is, so to say, the book of life and a second education. . . ."

Vassily Mihailovitch pondered. "The man speaks in rather a stilted way," he thought, "but there is a great deal of truth in what he says. My brother Platon has no knowledge of the world or of men or of life." After a brief silence he said aloud: "Do you know what, Platon? Travelling really may shake you up a bit. You are suffering from a lethargy of the soul. You are simply asleep, and not asleep from satiety or fatigue, but from lack of vivid impressions or sensations. Now I am quite the opposite. I should be very glad not to feel so keenly and not to take everything that happens so much to heart."

"Well, why do you take things so much to heart?" said Platonov. "You are only asking for trouble and you make worries for yourself."

"How can I help it when there is something unpleasant at every turn?" said Vassily. "Have you heard the trick that Lyenitsyn has played on us while you

have been away? He has seized our waste land up by the Red Hill."

"He doesn't know, that's why he has taken it," said Platonov. "He is a new man, he has only just come from Petersburg. We must talk with him and explain."

"He knows, he knows perfectly well; I sent to tell him but he answered with rudeness."

"You ought to have gone and explained it to him yourself. Talk it over with him."

"Well, no. He is too stuck up. I'm not going to see him. You can go yourself if you like."

"I would go; but I am of no use. He may take me in and deceive me."

"Well, if you like, I will drive over," said Tchitchikov.

Vassily glanced at him and thought: "He is fond of driving about!"

"You must only give me an idea what sort of man he is," said Tchitchikov, "and what the business is about."

"I am ashamed really to impose such a disagreeable commission on you, for even an interview with such a man is to me an unpleasant commission. I must tell you that he comes of a simple family of small landowners of our province, has risen in the service in Petersburg, has managed to get into aristocratic society by marrying somebody's illegitimate daughter and has begun to give himself airs. He behaves like a grand gentleman. In our province, thank God, people have some sense. Fashion is not the law for us, and Petersburg is not our holy place."

"Of course not," said Tchitchikov. "But what's the point at issue?"

"Well, it is really a nonsensical business. He hasn't got land enough, so—well he has seized our waste land, that is, he reckoned on the land being of no use, and the owners . . . and as luck would have it the peasants have from time immemorial assembled there to celebrate the 'Red Hill.' On that account I would rather sacrifice other better lands than give it up. Tradition is for me sacred."

"So you are ready to let him have other land?"

"Yes, if he hadn't behaved like this; but as far as I can see, he wants to bring it into court. Very well, we shall see which wins the case. Though it is not very clear on the map, there are old men still living who know about it."

"H'm," thought Tchitchikov, "they are both a bit touchy." But aloud he said: "It seems to me that the business might be arranged amicably. Everything depends on the arbitrator. By letter . . ."

(*Here two pages of the manuscript are lost.*)

. . . "that for you too it will be very advantageous to transfer, for instance, to my name all the dead souls that are still reckoned on the old census lists as belonging to your estates, so that I should pay the taxes for them. And to avoid giving any cause of offence, you would make the transfer by means of a regular deed of purchase as though the souls were living."

"Well, upon my word!" thought Lyenitsyn, "this is something very queer," and he drew a little back, chair and all, for he was completely nonplussed.

"I have no doubt you will readily agree to this," said Tchitchikov, "for it is a transaction of precisely the class of which you have been speaking. It will be a private affair between thoroughly trustworthy people, and there will be no harm to any one."

What was to be done? Lyenitsyn found himself in a difficult position. He could not have foreseen that the views he had just expressed would expose him to carrying them into action so quickly. The proposition was utterly unexpected. Of course there was nothing calculated to injure any one about this proceeding: landowners would in any case mortgage those dead souls together with their living ones; so that there could be no loss to the Treasury from it; the only difference was that they would all be in one man's hands, instead of being in the hands of several different persons. But, nevertheless, he was troubled. He was a law-abiding man and a business man, in a good sense. He would never have decided any case unjustly for the sake of a bribe, however large. But on this occasion he stood uncertain what to call this action, just or unjust. If any one else had come to him with such a proposition he might have said: "That's nonsense, ridiculous! I don't care for playing with dolls or any other sort of foolery." But his guest had made such a good impression on him already, they were so thoroughly in agreement in their views on the progress of science and enlightenment—how could he refuse? Lyenitsyn found himself in a very difficult position.

But at that moment, as though to relieve his distress, his wife, a young woman with a turn-up nose, thin and pale like all Petersburg ladies, and tastefully dressed

like all Petersburg ladies, came into the room. She was followed by a nurse carrying in her arms a baby, the first fruits of a tender passion of the young married couple. Tchitchikov, of course, went up to the lady at once, and the agreeable way in which he held his head on one side was enough alone, even apart from his courteous greeting, to dispose her in his favour. Then he ran up to the baby, who was on the point of breaking into a howl; Tchitchikov, however, succeeded by the words, "Agoo, agoo, little darling!", by snapping his fingers and dangling the sardonyx seal on his watch-chain, in luring him into his arms. As soon as he had him in his arms, he began tossing him up in the air and succeeded in evoking a gleeful smile on the baby's face, which delighted both his parents. But either from delight or from some other motive, the baby suddenly misbehaved himself. Madame Lyenitsyn cried out: "Oh good gracious! he has ruined your coat!"

Tchitchikov looked: the sleeve of his quite new dress-coat was completely spoilt. "Plague take you, you confounded little imp!" he muttered to himself in his wrath.

Lyenitsyn, his wife and the nurse all ran for eau-de-cologne; they began wiping him down on all sides.

"It's of no consequence," said Tchitchikov, "it is absolutely of no consequence. As though an innocent babe could do harm." And at the same time he was thinking to himself, "But how well he aimed, the confounded little beast!" "It's the golden age!" he said, when he had been thoroughly cleansed and the agreeable smile had come back into his face.

"Yes, indeed," said Lyenitsyn, turning to Tchitchikov also with an agreeable smile, "what is more to be en-

vied than the age of infancy? No anxieties, no thought of the future."

"A state into which one would willingly change at any moment," said Tchitchikov.

"Without thinking twice about it," said Lyenitsyn.

But I fancy both were lying; if such a transformation had been offered them, they would have changed their views pretty quickly. And indeed what fun is there sitting in a nurse's arms and spoiling people's coats!

The young wife retired with her firstborn and the nurse, for he too needed a little setting to rights: though he had been so liberal to Tchitchikov he had not spared himself.

This insignificant circumstance disposed Lyenitsyn still more favourably to Tchitchikov. Indeed, how could he refuse such an agreeable and tactful guest, who had lavished such caresses on his little one, and who had so magnanimously paid for it with his coat?

Lyenitsyn thought: "After all why should I not grant his request if that is what he wants. . . ."

(*Here there is a considerable hiatus in the manuscript.*)

CHAPTER V

TCHITCHIKOV was lolling on the sofa dressed in a new Persian dressing-gown of gold-coloured brocade, and bargaining with a dealer in contraband goods, of Jewish extraction and German accent; before them lay a piece of the very finest Dutch linen for shirts, and two cardboard boxes of excellent soap of the finest quality (it was the same sort of soap that he used to get hold of when he was in the Customs; it really had the property of imparting an incredible freshness to the complexion, and a surprising whiteness to the cheeks). While he was, like a connoisseur, purchasing these products so indispensable for a man of culture, he heard the rumble of an approaching carriage which set the walls and windows of the room faintly vibrating, and his Excellency Alexey Ivanovitch Lyenitsyn walked into the room.

"I appeal to your Excellency's judgment: what do you say to this linen and to this soap, and what do you think of this thing I bought yesterday?" As he spoke Tchitchikov put on his head a cap embroidered with gold and beads and looked like a Persian Shah, full of stateliness and dignity.

But without answering his question, his Excellency said:

"I have to speak to you about something important." His face looked troubled. The worthy dealer with the

German accent was at once dismissed, and they were left alone.

"Do you know, something unpleasant has happened. Another will has been found which the old lady made ten years ago. Half the property is left to a monastery and the other half to her two protégées, to be equally divided between them and nothing else to any one."

Tchitchikov was aghast.

"But that will is all nonsense. It means nothing, it is cancelled by the second."

"But it is not stated in that second will that it cancels the first."

"That's a matter of course: the second cancels the first. It's nonsense. That first will is of no consequence. I know the deceased's intentions perfectly. I was with her. Who signed this will? Who were the witnesses?"

"It was witnessed in the regular way at the court. The witnesses were Havanov and Burmilov, the former judge."

"That's bad," thought Tchitchikov, "Havanov's said to be honest. Burmilov is a canting old hypocrite, he reads the lessons in church."

"Come, it is nonsense, nonsense," he said aloud, and all at once he felt that he had determination enough to deal with any emergency. "I know better; I was present at the deceased lady's last moments. I know all about it better than any one. I am ready to take my oath in person."

These words and the air of decision with which they were uttered reassured Lyenitsyn.

He had been much perturbed and had almost been

suspecting there might have been something underhand on Tchitchikov's part in regard to the will (though of course he could never have conceived what had really happened). Now he reproached himself with being suspicious. His readiness to take an oath seemed a clear proof that Tchitchikov . . . We cannot say if Pavel Ivanovitch would really have had the hardihood to take a solemn oath about it, but he had the hardihood to say that he would.

"Don't worry yourself and set your mind at rest, I will go and discuss the matter with some lawyers. You ought not to be brought into the matter at all. You ought to be entirely outside it. I can stay in the town now as long as I like."

Tchitchikov immediately ordered his carriage and set out to visit a lawyer. This lawyer was a man of exceptional experience. He had been on his trial for the last fifteen years, and he had somehow managed to make it impossible that he should be dismissed from his post. Every one knew that he deserved, six times over deserved, to be sent to a penal settlement for his exploits. He was suspected on all sides, but it was never possible to bring complete proof and evidence against him. There really was something mysterious about it, and we might confidently have called him a sorcerer if our story had been cast in the dark ages.

The lawyer impressed Tchitchikov by the coldness of his expression and the greasiness of his dressing-gown, which was in striking contrast to the very good mahogany furniture, the gold clock under a glass shade, the chandelier that peeped through a muslin cover, put on to preserve it, and in fact to all the objects round

them which bore the unmistakable imprint of enlightened European culture.

Not baulked by the sceptical air of the lawyer, Tchitchikov proceeded to explain the difficult points of the case, and drew an alluring picture of the gratitude that would inevitably reward his kind advice and interest.

The lawyer replied to this by pointing out the uncertainty of all things earthly, and subtly suggested that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush.

There was nothing for it, he had to give him the bird in the hand. The philosopher's sceptical frigidity vanished instantly. It turned out that he was the most good-natured of men, very ready to talk and a most agreeable talker, no less tactful in his manners than Tchitchikov himself.

"Instead of making a long business of it, allow me to suggest that you have very likely not examined the will properly: probably there is some little note in it. You should take it home for the time. Although of course it is against the law to take such things into one's own keeping, yet if you ask certain officials in the proper way . . . I will use my influence too."

"I understand," thought Tchitchikov, and said, "I really don't quite remember whether there is a note in it or not," just as though he had not written the will himself.

"The very best thing is for you to look into that. However, in any case," he added very good-naturedly, "set your mind completely at rest and don't be bothered by anything, even if something worse happened. Never despair of anything: there is nothing in the world that can't be set right. Look at me, I am

always calm. Whatever charges are brought against me my composure is never disturbed."

There certainly was an extraordinary composure on the face of the lawyer-philosopher.

"Of course that's of the first importance," Tchitchikov said. "But you must admit that there may be cases and circumstances, and such false charges made by one's enemies and such difficult positions that all composure is destroyed."

"Believe me, that is weakness," the philosophical lawyer replied very calmly and good-naturedly. "Only take care that the statement of the case should always rest on documentary evidence, that nothing should be left to verbal evidence. And as soon as you see the case is approaching a *dénouement* and likely to be settled, try, not to justify and defend yourself, but simply to complicate it by introducing new facts, and thus . . ."

"You mean so as to . . . ?"

"Complicate it and nothing more," answered the philosopher, "introduce into the case other extraneous circumstances which will bring other people into it; make it complicated and nothing more, and then let some official from Petersburg unravel it, let him unravel it, let him unravel it!" he repeated, looking into Tchitchikov's eyes with peculiar pleasure, as a teacher looks at a pupil while explaining to him a tricky passage in the Russian grammar.

"Yes, it is very well if one can get hold of circumstances which are calculated to throw dust in their eyes," said Tchitchikov, also looking with pleasure into the philosopher's eyes like a pupil who has grasped the tricky passage explained to him by the teacher.

"The circumstances will turn up, they will turn up! Believe me: by constant practice the brain becomes apt at finding them. First of all remember that you will be helped. A complicated case is a godsend for many people: more officials are required, and they are paid more for it. . . . In short, we must drag into the case as many people as possible. There is no harm in some coming into it for nothing: it's for them to defend themselves, you know. . . . They have to draw up their answers in writing. They have to ransom themselves. . . . All that is bread and butter. Believe me that as soon as things begin to be critical, the first resource is complicating them. You can complicate things and muddle them, so that no one can make head or tail of it. Why am I so calm? Because I know that as soon as things begin to go badly, I'll involve every one in it, the governor and the vice-governor and the police-master and the treasurer—I'll bring them all into it. I know all their circumstances: who is on bad terms with whom and who wants to score off whom. Then let them all get out of it, and while they are doing it other people will have time to make their fortunes. You can only catch crayfish in troubled waters, you know. They are all only waiting to trouble them." Here the philosophic lawyer gazed into Tchitchikov's eyes again with the satisfaction of a teacher who explains a still more tricky passage in the Russian grammar.

"Yes, this is a wise man, certainly," thought Tchitchikov, and parted from the lawyer in the happiest and most cheerful frame of mind.

Completely reassured and fortified, he flung himself with careless agility on the resilient cushions of the carriage, told Selifan to draw back the hood of the

carriage (he had had the hood up and even the leather covers buttoned on his way to the lawyer's) and settled himself like a retired colonel of the Hussars, or even like Vishnepokromov himself, jauntily crossing one leg over the other, turning affably towards the people he met, and beaming under his new silk hat which was tilted a little over one ear. Selifan was told to turn in the direction of the bazaar. Both the travelling dealers and the local shopkeepers standing at their doors took off their hats respectfully, and Tchitchikov not without dignity lifted his in response. Many of them he knew already; others, though strangers, were so charmed by the smart air of the gentleman who knew so well how to deport himself, that they greeted him as though they too were acquaintances. There was a continual fair going on in the town of Tfooslavl. As soon as the horse fair and the agricultural fair were over, there followed one for the sale of drapery for gentlemen of the utmost refinement. Dealers who arrived in wheeled carriages stayed on till they had to depart in sledges.

"Pray walk in!" a shopkeeper, in a German coat of Moscow cut, with a round shaven chin, and an expression of the most refined gentility, said at the cloth shop, with a polite swagger, as he held his hat in his outstretched hand.

Tchitchikov went into the shop. "Show me some cloth, my good man."

The agreeable shopkeeper promptly lifted the flap of the counter and so making way for himself, stood with his back to his wares and his face to his customer. So standing and still holding his hat in his hand he greeted Tchitchikov once more. Then putting his hat

on his head and leaning over with both hands on the counter, said: "What sort of cloth? Do you prefer it of English make or of home manufacture?"

"Home manufacture," said Tchitchikov, "but of the best sort that goes under the name of English."

"What colours do you desire?" asked the shopkeeper, still agreeably swaying with his two hands pressed on the table.

"Some dark colour, olive or bottle green, shot with something approaching the cranberry colour," said Tchitchikov.

"I may say that I can give you a first-class article as good as anything in Petersburg or Moscow," said the shopkeeper, clambering up to get a roll of cloth; he flung it lightly on the counter, unrolled it from the other end, and held it up to the light. "What a sheen! The most fashionable, the latest style!" The cloth shone as though it were of silk. The shopkeeper divined that he had before him a connoisseur in cloth and did not care to begin with the ten rouble quality.

"Very fair," said Tchitchikov, barely glancing at it. "Look here, my good man, show me now what you are keeping to show me last, and a colour that has more . . . more red sheen in it."

"I understand: you really desire the colour that is just coming into fashion. I have got a cloth of the very finest quality. But I must warn you that it is a very high price, but there, it is of the very highest quality."

The roll fell from above. The shopkeeper unrolled it with still greater dexterity; he caught hold of the other end and displayed a really silky-looking material, and held it up to Tchitchikov, so that the latter could

not only see but also sniff at it, merely saying: "Here is a bit of cloth! the colour of the smoke and flame of Navarino!"

They came to terms over the price. The arshin rod like an enchanter's wand promptly cut off enough for a coat and breeches for Tchitchikov. Making a nick with the scissors the shopkeeper with both hands neatly tore the cloth right across the whole width of the stuff, at the conclusion of which operation he bowed to Tchitchikov with the most ingratiating affability. The cloth was promptly rolled up and neatly wrapped in paper; the parcel was tied up with fine twine. Tchitchikov was about to put his hand in his pocket, but he was aware of a very refined arm agreeably encircling his waist, while his ears were greeted with the words: "What are you buying there, my good friend?"

"Oh, a most agreeable and unexpected meeting!" cried Tchitchikov.

"An agreeable encounter," said the voice of the person whose arm was round his waist. It was Vishnepokromov.

"I was just going to pass the shop without noticing, when suddenly I saw a familiar face—I couldn't deny myself the pleasure! There is no doubt that the cloth is ever so much better this year. It used to be a shame, a disgrace! I never could find anything decent. . . . I am ready to pay forty roubles, fifty even, but give me something good. . . . What I think is: either have a thing that really is the best, or else have nothing at all. Isn't that right?"

"Perfectly right!" said Tchitchikov. "Why give oneself a lot of trouble if not to have really good things?"

"Show me some cloth at a moderate price," they heard a voice say behind them, which seemed to Tchitchikov familiar. He turned round and saw Hlobuev. It did not seem that he was buying cloth from extravagance, for the coat he had on was very shabby.

"Ah, Pavel Ivanovitch! Do let me have a talk with you at last. There's no meeting with you anywhere. I have been to find you several times; you were never at home."

"My good friend, I have been so busy that upon my soul I have had no time." He looked from side to side as though trying to escape from an interview, and he saw Murazov coming into the shop. "Afanasy Vassilyevitch! Ah, upon my word!" said Tchitchikov. "What a delightful meeting!" and after him Vishnepokromov repeated, "Afanasy Vassilyevitch!" Hlobuev repeated, "Afanasy Vassilyevitch!" And last of all the well-bred shopkeeper, taking his hat from his head and flourishing it with his arm stretched out at full length, brought out, "Afanasy Vassilyevitch, our humble respects!" On all the faces appeared that doglike ingratiating servility which sinful man exhibits before a millionaire.

The old man greeted all of them and turned at once to Hlobuev:

"Pardon me, I saw you from a distance going into the shop and ventured to disturb you. If you will be free in a little while and will be passing by my house, do me the favour to come in for a few minutes. I want to have a talk with you."

Hlobuev answered, "Very good, Afanasy Vassilyevitch."

And the old man bowing to all of them again, went out.

"It makes me feel quite giddy," said Tchitchikov, "when I think that that man has ten millions. It's positively incredible."

"It isn't the right state of things though," said Vishnepokromov, "capital ought not to be in one man's hands. That is the subject of ever so many treatises all over Europe nowadays. If you have money, well, share it with others: entertain, give balls, keep up a beneficent luxury that gives bread to tradesmen and artisans."

"I can't understand it," said Tchitchikov. "Ten millions and he lives like a humble peasant! Why, goodness knows what one might do with ten millions! Why, one might so arrange one's affairs as to keep no company but that of princes and generals."

"Yes," the shopkeeper put in, "it really is a lack of refinement. If a merchant becomes distinguished, he is no longer a merchant but is in a way a financier. In that case I would take a box at the theatre and wouldn't marry my daughter to a humble colonel! I'd marry her to a general or nobody. I shouldn't think much of a colonel. I should have to have a confectioner to get my dinner, not a cook."

"Yes, upon my word," said Vishnepokromov, "there is no denying that one could do anything with ten millions. Just give me ten millions and you would see what I would do with it." "No," thought Tchitchikov, "you wouldn't do much good with ten millions. But if I were given ten millions, I really should do something."

"And if I only had ten millions!" thought Hlobuev, "I would not do as I have done in the past, I wouldn't spend it so insanely. After such a terrible experience

one learns the value of every farthing. Ah, I should do differently now . . ." And then after a few moments' reflection he inwardly asked himself, "Would you really manage more sensibly now?" and with a gesture of despair, he added, "The devil! I expect I should squander it just the same as before," and going out of the shop he set off to Murazov's, wishing to know what the latter had to tell him.

"I was waiting for you, Pyotr Petrovitch!" said Murazov, seeing Hlobuev as he came in. "Please come into my room," and he drew Hlobuev into the room with which the reader is already familiar, less luxurious than that of a government clerk with a salary of seven hundred roubles a year. "Tell me, I suppose your circumstances are easier now? I suppose you must have got something from your aunt anyway?"

"What shall I say, Afanasy Vassilyevitch? I don't know whether my position is any better. All that came to me was fifty serfs and thirty thousand roubles, with which I shall have to pay part of my debts, and then I shall have absolutely nothing again. And the worst of it is there has been a dirty business about this will. There has been such dishonesty, Afanasy Vassilyevitch! I'll tell you all about it and you will be amazed at the things that have been done. That Tchitchikov . . ."

"Excuse me, Pyotr Petrovitch; but before we talk about that Tchitchikov let me talk about you. Tell me how much in your opinion would be necessary and sufficient to get you out of your difficulties?"

"Why, to get out of my difficulties, to pay off all my debts and to be able to live on the most moderate scale, I should need at least a hundred thousand or more."

"Well, and if you had that how would you arrange your life?"

"Why then I should take a modest flat, devote myself to my children's education, for it is no good for me to go into the service, I am not fit for anything."

"And why are you fit for nothing?"

"Why, what am I fitted for? You can see for yourself that I can't very well begin as a copying clerk. You forget that I have a family. I am forty, already my back aches, I have grown lazy; and they wouldn't give me more important positions; I am not in their good books, you know. I confess that I wouldn't accept what is called a profitable post. I am a good-for-nothing person and a gambler, perhaps, and anything you like, but I am not going to take bribes. I couldn't get on with the Krasnonosovs and the Samosvitovs!"

"All the same, pardon me, I can't understand how one can exist without some path in life; how can you go forward except on a road; how can you advance without the earth under your feet; how can you float when your boat is not in the water? Life, you know, is a journey. Pardon me, Pyotr Petrovitch, but the gentlemen of whom you were speaking are, anyway, on some sort of a road, at any rate they are working. Well, suppose they have turned aside from the straight way, as happens to every simple mortal; still there is hope that they will wander back again. He who goes forward is bound to arrive; there is hope that he may find the road. But how can he who stands idle come upon any road? The road will not come to me, you know."

"Believe me, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, I feel that you are perfectly right . . . but I must tell you that all

capacity for action is dead in me; I cannot see that I can be of any service to any one in the world. I feel that I am an absolutely useless log. In old days when I was younger I used to think that it was all a question of money, that if I had had hundreds of thousands, I might have made hundreds of people happy; that I might have helped poor artists, might have founded libraries and made collections. I have some taste and I know that in many respects I could have managed better than those of our own rich men who do all that sort of thing so stupidly. But now I see that that too is vanity and that there is not much sense in it. No, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, I am good for nothing, absolutely nothing, I tell you. I am not fit for any sort of work."

"Listen, Pyotr Petrovitch! You pray and go to church, you miss neither matins nor vespers, I know that. Though you are not fond of early rising you get up early and go to service—you go at four o'clock in the morning when no one is getting up."

"That is a different matter, Afanasy Vassilyevitch. I do that for the salvation of my soul, because I am convinced that thereby I do to some extent make up for my idle life, that however bad I may be, yet humble prayer and some self-denial has a value in the eyes of the Lord. I tell you that I pray, without faith,—but still I pray. I have a feeling that there is a Master on whom everything depends, just as horses and cattle feel they have a rightful master."

"So that you pray to please Him to whom you pray and to save your soul, and that gives you strength and energy to get out of bed. Believe me, that if you would undertake your duties in the same way as you

serve Him to whom you pray, you would develop a capacity for action, and nobody would be able to turn you from it."

"Afanasy Vassilyevitch! I tell you again, that's a different thing. In the first case I see anyway what I am doing. I tell you I am ready to go into a monastery, and I would perform the hardest tasks that could be laid upon me because I see for whom I am doing it. It is not for me to reason. In that case I am convinced that those who have set me the task will be called to account; in that case I am obeying, and I know that I am obeying God."

"And why don't you reason in the same way in worldly affairs? You know in the world too we ought to serve God and no one else. If we serve any other it is only because we believe that it is God's will, and except for that we should not. What else are all the capacities and gifts which differ in every man? Why, they are the instruments of our prayer: in the one case in words, and the other in work. You cannot go into a monastery, you know: you are bound to the world, you have a family."

Here Murazov paused. Hlobuev too was silent.

"So you think that if for instance you had two hundred thousand roubles your living would be secure and you could live more prudently in the future?"

"Yes, anyway I should occupy myself with what I should be able to do: I should look after the education of my children, I should have the possibility of getting them good teachers."

"And shall I say to that, Pyotr Petrovitch, that in two years' time you'll be in bondage to debt again as though you were in cords?"

Hlobuev did not speak for a while, then he began hesitatingly:

"Well, after such experiences, though . . ."

"What's the use of arguing about it!" said Murazov. "You are a man with a good heart: if a friend comes to you and asks for a loan—you'll give it to him; if you see a poor man you will want to help him; if a pleasant guest visits you, you will want to entertain him handsomely, and you will give way to your first impulse of kindness, and will forget your prudence! And last of all, allow me to tell you in all sincerity that you are not capable of bringing up your children. Only the father who has not failed in his own duty can educate his children. And your wife too . . . She has a good heart too, but she has not had at all the right education for bringing up children. I even doubt—pardon me, Pyotr Petrovitch—whether it will not be bad for your children to be with you!"

Hlobuev pondered; he began mentally looking at himself from every point of view, and felt that Murazov was to some extent right.

"Do you know what, Pyotr Petrovitch; put all that, the care of your children and your affairs into my hands. Leave your wife and your children, I will take care of them. Your circumstances are such, you know, that you are really in my hands; if things go on like this you'll starve. In your position you must be ready to do anything. Do you know Ivan Potapitch?"

"And I have a great respect for him even though he does go about in a peasant's coat."

"Ivan Potapitch was a millionaire, he married his daughters to officials and lived like a king; when he

went bankrupt—what could he do?—he became a clerk. It wasn't pleasant for him to change from a silver dish to a humble bowl: he felt as though he couldn't touch anything. Now Ivan Potapitch could eat from a silver dish but he doesn't care to. He could gather it all together again, but he says: 'No, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, now I serve not myself nor for myself, but because it is God's will. . . . I don't want to do anything to please myself. I listen to you because I want to obey God and not men, and because God speaks only by the lips of the best men. You are wiser than I, and therefore it is not for me to say but for you.' That is what Ivan Potapitch says, but to tell the truth he is many times wiser than I am."

"Afanasy Vassilyevitch! I too am ready to accept your authority over me . . . to be your servant and what you will; I give myself up to you. But do not give me work beyond my strength: I am no Potapitch, and I tell you I am not fit for anything good."

"It is not I, Pyotr Petrovitch, sir, that lay it upon you, but since you would like to be of service as you say yourself, here is a godly work for you. There is a church being built by the voluntary offerings of good people. There is not enough money, it must be collected. Put on the humble coat of a peasant. . . . You know you are a humble man now, a ruined nobleman is no better than a beggar: what's the use of standing on your dignity—with a book in your hand get into a humble cart and go about the towns and the villages; from the bishop you will receive a blessing and a book with the numbered pages, and so God be with you."

Pyotr Petrovitch was amazed at this perfectly new

occupation. For him, who was anyway a nobleman of ancient lineage, to set off with a book in his hands, begging for a church and jolting in a cart! But it was impossible to refuse and get out of it; it was a godly work.

"You hesitate?" said Murazov. "You'll be doing two services in this: one a service to God, and another a service to me."

"What is the service to you?"

"This is it. Since you will be travelling about those parts where I have not been, you will find out everything on the spot, how the peasants are living, where they are better off, where they are in need, and in what condition they all are. I must tell you that I love the peasants, perhaps because I've come from the peasantry myself. But the trouble is that all sorts of wickedness have become common among them. The heretics and vagrants of all sorts confound them, and some are even rising up in rebellion against those in authority over them, and if a man is oppressed he will readily rebel. Indeed it is not hard to incite a man who is really ill treated. But the fact is that reforms ought not to begin from below. It's a bad business when men come to blows: there never will be any sense from that—it's a gain to none but the thieves. You are a clever man, you will look about you, you will find out where a man is really suffering from the fault of others, and where from his own restless character, and afterwards you will tell me all about it. In case of need I'll give you a small sum for distribution among those who are really suffering through no fault of their own. It will be serviceable also if you,

on your part too, comfort them with words and explain well to them that God has bidden us bear our burdens without repining, and pray when we are unhappy, and not rebel or take matters into our own hands. In fact, speak to them without stirring up one against another and make peace between them. If you see in somebody hatred against any one whatever, do your very utmost."

"Afanasy Vassilyevitch, the work which you entrust to me is holy work," said Hlobuev, "but do think to whom you are entrusting it. You might entrust it to a man of holy life who has himself known how to forgive."

"Well, and I am not saying that you should do all that, but so far as possible do all that you can. Anyway you will come back knowing a great deal about those parts and will have an idea of the condition of that district. An official never gets into personal contact, and the peasant will not be open with them. While you, begging for the church, will have a look at every one,—at the artisan, at the merchant, and will have the chance of questioning every one. I tell you this because the governor-general particularly needs such men; and passing by all official posts you will be receiving one in which your life will not be useless."

"I will try, I will do my best as far as in me lies," said Hlobuev. And there was a perceptible note of confidence in his voice, he straightened his back and held his head up like a man on whom the light of hope has dawned. "I see that God has blessed you with understanding, and you know some things better than we short-sighted people."

"Now allow me to ask you," said Murazov, "what about Tchitchikov, and what's the meaning of this business?"

"I can tell you the most unheard-of things about Tchitchikov. He does such things. . . . Do you know, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, that the will was forged? The real one has been found, in which everything was left to her protégées."

"You don't say so? But who forged the false will?"

"The fact is that it was an abominable business! They say it was Tchitchikov, and that the will was signed after her death: they dressed up some woman to take the place of the deceased, and she it was signed it. It was a scandalous thing in fact. It's suspected that government officials had a hand in it too. They say the governor-general knows about it. They say that thousands of petitions have been sent in. Suitors have turned up for Marya Yeremyevna already; two official persons are fighting over her. So that's what's going on, Afanasy Vassilyevitch!"

"I've heard nothing about it, and it certainly is a shady business. Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov is certainly a most enigmatical person," said Murazov.

"I sent in a petition for myself, too, to remind them that there is a near kinsman . . ."

"They may all fight it out together for me," thought Hlobuev as he went out. "Afanasy Vassilyevitch is no fool. No doubt he has given me this commission with intention. I must carry it out, that's all."

He began thinking about the journey while Murazov was still repeating to himself: "Most enigmatical man, Pavel Ivanovitch Tchitchikov. If only such will and perseverance were devoted to a good object!"

Meanwhile petition after petition poured into the law-courts. Relations turned up of whom nobody had heard before. Just as carrion birds flock about a dead body, so everybody pounced upon the immense property left by the old lady: there were secret reports upon Tchitchikov, upon the forgery of the last will, upon the forgery of the first will also, evidence of the theft and concealment of sums of money. Evidence was even produced incriminating Tchitchikov for the purchase of dead souls and for the smuggling of contraband goods at the time when he was in the Customs. They dug up everything and found out all his previous history. God knows how they scented it out and how they learned it. Evidence was even produced regarding matters of which Tchitchikov supposed that no one knew but himself and four walls. For a time all this was a judicial secret, and had not reached his ears, though a trustworthy note, which he very soon received from his lawyer, gave him some idea that a fine mess was brewing. The note was brief: "I hasten to inform you that there is going to be a great scrimmage; but remember that it never does to be agitated. The great thing is to be calm. We will manage everything." This note completely reassured Tchitchikov. "That man's a real genius," he said when he had read the note. To complete his good humour at that moment the tailor brought his new suit. Tchitchikov conceived an intense desire to behold himself in his new dress-coat of the "flame and smoke of Navarino." He pulled on the breeches which set wonderfully upon him, so that it was a perfect picture. . . . Such thighs . . . it was such a splendid fit, the calves too, the cloth brought out every detail and made them look

even more resilient. When he drew the buckle behind him, his stomach was like a drum. He beat on it with a brush, saying: "What a fool he is and yet he completes the picture!" The coat seemed to be even better than the breeches, there was not a wrinkle, it fitted tightly on both sides and flared out at the waist, showing off the smart curve of his figure. On Tchitchikov's remarking that it cut him a little under the left armpit, the tailor immediately smiled: that made it set still better on the figure.

"Set your mind at rest as regards the cut, set your mind at rest," he repeated with undisguised triumph, "there is not a cut like that anywhere in Petersburg."

The tailor himself came from Petersburg and had put upon his sign-board: "Foreign tailor from London and Paris." He was not fond of doing things by halves, and wanted to ram both cities at once down the throats of the other tailors, so that for the future no one should display those names, but might simply write themselves down as coming from some paltry "Carlsruhe" or "Copenhagen."

Tchitchikov paid the tailor with magnanimous liberality, and left alone, began scrutinising himself at his leisure in the looking-glass with the eye of an artist, with aesthetic emotion and *con amore*. It seemed to make everything even better than before: his cheeks looked more interesting, his chin more alluring, the white collar gave a tone to the cheeks, the dark-blue satin cravat gave a tone to the collar; the new-fashioned fold of the shirt-front gave a tone to the cravat, the rich velvet waistcoat gave a tone to the shirt-front, and the coat of the "smoke and flame of Navarino," shimmering like silk, gave a tone to everything. He

turned to the right—it was good! He turned to the left —that was better still! He had the figure of a *kammerherr*, or of an attaché on a foreign diplomatic mission, or of a gentleman who speaks French so beautifully that a Frenchman is nothing to him, and who even in a rage never demeans himself with a Russian word, but swears in French. Such refinement! Putting his head a little on one side he tried to assume the attitude in which he would address a lady of middle age, and of the most modern culture: it made a perfect picture. Painter, take a brush and paint him! In his delight he cut a little caper after the fashion of an *entrechat*. The chest of drawers shook and a bottle of eau-de-cologne fell on the floor; but this did not trouble him in the least. He very naturally called the bottle a silly thing, and began wondering: "To whom shall I pay my first visit? The best of all . . ."

When all at once in the passage there was a clanking of spurs and behold! a gendarme, fully armed, as though he had been a whole troop of soldiers. "You are commanded to appear before the governor-general this instant!" Tchitchikov was aghast; before him loomed a whiskered monster with a horse's tail on his head, a bandolier over his right shoulder, a bandolier over his left shoulder, a huge sabre hanging at his side. He fancied that on the other side was hanging a gun and God knows what else besides. He was like a whole regiment in himself. Tchitchikov was beginning to protest. The monster said roughly: "You are commanded to come at once!" Through the door in the hall he caught a glimpse of another monster; he looked out of window, there was a carriage. What could he do? Just as he was, in his coat of the "smoke

and flame of Navarino" he had to get into it, and trembling all over he drove off with the gendarmes beside him.

They did not even let him get his breath in the hall. "Go in! the prince is expecting you," said the clerk on duty. He caught glimpses, as through a mist, of the hall with the couriers receiving envelopes, then of a big room which he crossed, thinking: "This is how men are seized and without trial, without anything, sent straight to Siberia." His heart beat more violently than the most passionate lover's. At last a door was thrown open before him: and he was confronted with a study, with portfolios, shelves and books, and the prince, the embodiment of anger.

"The author of my ruin!" thought Tchitchikov, "he'll be the ruin of my life," and he almost fell fainting: "he will slay me as a wolf slays a lamb!"

"I spared you, I allowed you to stay in the town when you ought to have been in prison, and you have disgraced yourself again with the foulest dishonesty with which a man has ever disgraced himself." The prince's lips trembled with anger.

"What foul action and dishonesty, your Excellency?" asked Tchitchikov, trembling in every limb.

"The woman who signed the will at your instigation," said the prince, coming closer and looking Tchitchikov straight in the face, "has been arrested and will stand beside you."

Tchitchikov turned as pale as a sheet. "Your Excellency! I will tell you the whole truth of the matter; I am to blame, I am truly to blame, but not so much to blame, my enemies have traduced me."

"No one can traduce you, because your infamy is

many times worse than any slanderer could invent. I believe you have never done anything in your life that was not dishonest. Every farthing you have gained has been gained in some dishonest way, by thieving and dishonesty that deserves the knout and Siberia! No, enough! You will be removed to prison this minute and there, side by side with the lowest scoundrels and robbers, you must wait for your fate to be decided. And even that is too merciful, for you are far worse than they are: they are in smock and sheepskin while you . . ." He glanced at the coat of the "smoke and flame of Navarino," and, taking hold of the bellpull, rang.

"Your Excellency," shrieked Tchitchikov, "be merciful! You are the father of a family. Me I do not ask you to spare, I have an old mother!"

"You are lying," cried the prince wrathfully. "Last time you besought me for the sake of your wife and children, though you haven't any; now it is your mother!"

"Your Excellency! I am a scoundrel and the meanest wretch," said Tchitchikov. "I was lying indeed, I had neither wife nor children; but God is my witness I have always longed to have a wife and to fulfill the duties of a man and a citizen, that I might really deserve the respect of my fellows and my superiors . . . But what a calamitous concatenation of circumstances! With my heart's blood, your Excellency, I have had to earn a bare subsistence. At every step snares and temptation, enemies, and men ready to ruin and plunder me. My whole life has been like a ship on the ocean waves. I am a man, your Excellency!"

Tears suddenly gushed from his eyes. He fell at

the prince's feet, just as he was, in his coat of the "smoke and flame of Navarino," in his velvet waistcoat and satin cravat, in his marvellously cut breeches and well-arranged hair that diffused a scent of eau-de-cologne.

"Do not come near me! Call the soldier to take him!" said the prince to the attendant who entered.

"Your Excellency!" cried Tchitchikov, clasping the prince's boot in both arms.

A shudder of repulsion ran through every fibre of the prince.

"Get away, I tell you!" he said, trying to pull his leg out of Tchitchikov's embrace.

"Your Excellency! I will not move from the spot till you have mercy on me!" said Tchitchikov, not letting go his hold but pressing the prince's boot to his bosom, and together with it moving over the floor in his coat of the "smoke and flame of Navarino."

"Get away, I tell you!" said the prince, with that inexplicable feeling of repulsion which a man experiences at the sight of a hideous insect which he cannot bring himself to stamp upon. He shook himself so violently that Tchitchikov got a kick on his cheek, his agreeably rounded chin and teeth; but he did not let go of the foot, but pressed the boot still more warmly in his embrace. Two stalwart gendarmes dragged him away by force, and taking him under the arms led him through all the rooms. He was pale, shattered, in that numbly terrified condition in which a man is thrown who sees before him the black form of inevitable death, that monster so terrible and alien to our nature. . . .

Just in the doorway on the stairs he met Murazov. A ray of hope instantly gleamed upon him. In one

instant he tore himself with unatural force out of the hands of the two gendarmes and fell at the feet of the astounded old man.

"My good sir, Pavel Ivanovitch, what is the matter?"

"Save me! they are taking me to prison, to death. . . ." The gendarmes seized him and led him away, without letting him have a hearing.

A damp stinking cell, smelling of soldiers' boots and leg wrappers, an unpainted table, two wretched chairs, a window with iron gratings, a dilapidated stove which smoked through a crack but gave no heat, this was the abode in which our Tchitchikov, who had just begun to taste the sweets of life and to attract the attention of his countrymen, found himself in his delicate new coat of the "smoke and flame of Navarino." They had not even let him arrange to take the most necessary articles, to take his case in which he had his money, his portmanteau in which he had his wardrobe. His papers relating to his purchase of dead souls, all were now in the hands of the officials! He grovelled on the floor, and the gnawing worm of terrible, hopeless grief coiled about his heart. With increasing rapidity, it began corroding his heart, which was utterly defenceless. Another such day, another day of such misery and there would have been no Tchitchikov left. But some one was keeping vigilant watch over Tchitchikov and holding out a hand to save him. An hour after he had reached this terrible plight, the doors of the prison opened, and old Murazov walked in.

If a draught of spring water were poured down the throat of a man tortured by burning thirst he would not have been so revived as poor Tchitchikov.

"My saviour!" said Tchitchikov, jumping up from

the floor on which he had flung himself in heartrending grief; instantly he kissed his hand and pressed it to his bosom. "God will reward you for visiting the unhappy!"

He burst into tears.

The old man looked at him with an expression of pain and distress and said only: "Ah, Pavel Ivanovitch! Pavel Ivanovitch, what have you done!"

"I have done everything that the basest man might have done. But judge, judge, can I be treated like this? I am a nobleman. Without trial, without inquiry I have been flung into prison, everything has been taken from me: my things, my case . . . there is money in it, property, all my property, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, the property I have acquired by blood and sweat . . ."

And unable to restrain the rush of fresh grief that flooded his heart he sobbed loudly on a note which carried through the thick walls of the prison and resounded with a hollow echo in the distance, he tore off his satin cravat and gripping himself near his collar tore his coat of the "flame and smoke of Navarino."

"Pavel Ivanovitch, anyway you must take leave of your property and of everything in the world: you have fallen under the sway of implacable law and not under the authority of any man."

"I have been my own ruin, I feel that I have been my own ruin. I could not stop in time. But what is such a fearful punishment for, Afanasy Vassilyevitch! Am I a robber? Have I made any one unhappy? By toil and sweat, by bloody sweat I have made my hard-earned kopecks. What have I made my money for? To live out the remnant of my days in comfort, to

leave something to my wife and the children whom I had intended to have for the welfare, for the service of my country. I have not been straightforward, I admit it . . . what could I do? for I saw that I could never get there by the straight road, and that the shortest way was by the crooked path. But I have toiled, I have exerted myself. While those blackguards who take thousands in the courts—and not as though it were from the government—they rob poor people of their last kopeck, they fleece those who have nothing! Afanasy Vassilyevitch, I have not been profligate, I've not been drunken. . . . And what toil, what iron endurance I have shown! Yes I have, I may say, paid for every kopeck I have gained by suffering, suffering! Let any one of them endure what I have! What, what has all my life been? A bitter struggle, a ship tossing in the waves. And all at once to be deprived of what I have earned, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, of what I have won by such struggles . . ." He could not finish but broke into loud sobs with an unbearable ache in his heart. He sank on to a chair and tore the rent skirt of his smart coat completely off, flung it to a distance and putting both hands up to his hair, of which he had always taken such scrupulous care, tore it mercilessly, taking pleasure in the pain by which he hoped to stifle the insufferable ache in his heart.

"Ah, Pavel Ivanovitch, Pavel Ivanovitch!" said Murazov, looking mournfully at him and shaking his head. "I keep thinking what a man you might have made if with the same energy and patience you had applied yourself to honest labour and for a better object! If only any one of those who care for what is good had used as much energy in its service as you

have to gain your kopecks! . . . And had been capable of sacrificing personal vanity and pride, without sparing himself, for a good cause as you have done to gain your kopecks!"

"Afanasy Vassilyevitch!" said poor Tchitchikov, and he clutched the old man's hands in both of his. "Oh, if I could but be set free and could regain my property! I swear to you that I would lead a very different life from this hour! Save me, benefactor, save me!"

"What can I do? I should have to fight against the law. Even supposing I brought myself to do that, the prince is a just man, nothing would induce him to transgress it."

"Benefactor! you can do anything. It is not the law that terrifies me—I can find means for outwitting the law—but the fact that . . . I have been flung into prison, that I am lying here abandoned like a dog, while my property, my papers, my case . . . save me!"

He embraced the old man's feet and watered them with his tears.

"Ah, Pavel Ivanovitch, Pavel Ivanovitch!" said the old man, shaking his head. "That property has blinded you! For the sake of it you have not thought of your poor soul."

"I will think of my poor soul too, but save me!"

"Pavel Ivanovitch!" said Murazov, and he paused. "To save you is not in my power, you see it yourself. But I will do everything I can to alleviate your lot and set you free. I don't know whether I shall succeed in doing that, but I will try. If I should succeed beyond my expectation, Pavel Ivanovitch, I beg of you a favour in return for my trouble; abandon all

these crooked means of making gain. I tell you on my honour that if I were deprived of all my property —and I have more than you—I should not weep. Aie, aie, it is not those possessions which can be confiscated that matter, but those which no one can steal or take away from us! You have lived in the world long enough. You yourself call your life a ship tossing in the waves. You have already enough to last you for the rest of your days. Settle in a quiet corner near to a church and to good simple people, or if you are possessed by a great desire to leave descendants, marry a good girl, not rich but accustomed to moderation and simple housekeeping (and truly you will not regret it). Forget this noisy world and all its alluring luxuries, let it forget you too. There is no peacefulness in it. You see that all in it are enemies, tempters or traitors."

Tchitchikov pondered. Something strange, feelings hitherto unknown to him which he could not account for, rose in his heart: it seemed as though something were trying to awaken in him, something suppressed from childhood by the harsh, dead discipline of his dreary boyhood, by the desolateness of his home, his solitude, the niggardliness and poverty of his first impressions, and as though something, in bondage to the stern fate that looked mournfully at him as through a window darkened by the snowstorms of winter, were trying to break its chains.

"Only save me, Afanasy Vassilyevitch!" he cried, "and I will lead a different life, I will follow your advice! I give you my word."

"Mind, Pavel Ivanovitch, there is no going back from your word," said Murazov, holding his hand.

"I might go back from it perhaps, had it not been

for this terrible lesson," said poor Tchitchikov with a sigh, and he added: "but the lesson is bitter; a bitter, bitter lesson, Afanasy Vassilyevitch!"

"It is a good thing it is bitter. Thank God for it, and pray to Him. I will go and do my best." Saying this the old man withdrew.

Tchitchikov no longer wept or tore his coat and hair; he was calm.

"Yes, it is enough!" he said at last, "a different life, a different life! It is high time indeed to become a decent man. Oh, if only I can somehow get out of this and go off with only a little capital, I will settle far away. . . . If I can but get back my papers . . . and the deeds of purchase . . ." he mused a little: "well? why abandon that which I have gained with such labour? I won't buy any more but I must mortgage those. Getting them cost me such labour! I shall mortgage them so as to buy an estate with the money. I shall become a landowner, because one can do a great deal of good in that position."

And the feelings which had taken possession of him when he was at Skudronzhoglo's rose up in his heart again, and he recalled the latter's charming clever talk about the fruitfulness and usefulness of work on the land as he sat in the warm evening light. The country suddenly seemed to him delightful, as though he had been able at the moment to feel all its charms.

"We are foolish, we race after vanity!" he said at last. "Really it is from idleness! Everything is near, everything is at hand, but we run to the ends of the earth. Is not life as good if one is buried in the wilds? Pleasure is really to be found in work. Skudronzhoglo is right. And nothing is sweeter than the fruit of one's

own labours. . . . Yes, I will work, I will settle in the country, and I will work honestly so as to have a good influence on others. Why, I am not utterly good-for-nothing, am I? I have the very abilities for making a good manager; I have the qualities of carefulness, promptitude, good sense and even perseverance. I have only to make up my mind. Only now I feel truly and clearly that there is a duty which a man ought to perform on earth, without tearing himself away from the place and the niche in which he has been placed."

And a life of toil, away from the noise of cities and from all the temptations that man has devised in his idleness, rose up before him in such vivid colours that he almost forgot all the horror of his position, and perhaps was even ready to thank providence for this bitter trial, if only they would release him, and let him have at least a part of his property. But . . . the door of his filthy prison opened and there walked in a certain official, one Samosvitov, an epicure, a capital companion, a rake and a sly beast as his colleagues said of him. In time of war this man would have performed marvels: he would have been sent to make his way through impassable dangerous places, to steal a cannon from under the very nose of the enemy, that would have been the very task for him. But lacking a military career he had thrown his energies into civil life, and, instead of feats for which he would have been with good reason decorated, he did all sorts of nasty and abominable things. Incredible to relate, he was quite good to his comrades, he never sold them to any one, and when he had given a promise he kept it; but those in authority over him he re-

garded as something like the battery of the enemy through which he had to make his way, taking advantage of every weak spot or gap in their defences. . . .

"We know all about your position, we've heard all about it!" he said, when he saw that the door was close shut behind him. "Never mind, never mind! Don't be downcast, everything will be put right. We will all work for you and are your servants! Thirty thousand for all and nothing more!"

"Really," cried Tchitchikov, "and shall I be entirely acquitted?"

"Entirely! And you will get compensation too for damages."

"And for your trouble? . . ."

"Thirty thousand, that's for all together—for our fellows and for the governor-general's and for the secretary."

"But excuse me, how can I—all my things, my writing-case. . . . It's all been sealed up now, under guard. . . ."

"Within an hour you shall have it all. You shake hands on it, eh?"

Tchitchikov gave his hand. His heart was throbbing, and he could not believe that it was possible. . . .

"Farewell for the time then! Our mutual friend commissioned me to tell you that the great thing is calm and presence of mind."

"H'm!" thought Tchitchikov. "I understand, the lawyer!"

Samosvitov withdrew. Tchitchikov left alone was still unable to believe what he had said, when, less

than an hour after their conversation, his case was brought him, with papers, money and everything in perfect order. Somosvitov had gone as though armed with authority, he had scolded the sentinels for not being careful enough, had ordered the man in charge to put more soldiers on watch for greater security, had not only taken the case, but had even removed from it all papers that could have compromised Tchitchikov in any way; he had tied all this up together, put a seal on it and commanded the very same soldier to take it promptly to Tchitchikov himself under cover of necessaries for the night, so that Tchitchikov received together with his papers all the warm things needed for covering his frail body. It delighted him unutterably to receive this so quickly. He was buoyed up by fresh hopes and already beginning again to dream of certain things; an evening at the theatre, a dancer after whom he was dangling. The country and a peaceful life began to seem duller while the town with its noise and bustle was more full of colour and brighter again. . . . Oh, life!

Meanwhile the case was developing into unlimited proportions in the courts and legal offices. The clerks' pens were busily at work and the legal bigwigs were deeply engaged, as they took their snuff with the feelings of an artist admiring their own crooked handiwork. Tchitchikov's lawyer was working the whole mechanism unseen, like a hidden magician; before any one had time to look round he had them all in a complete tangle. The case grew more and more complicated. Somosvitov excelled himself in his incredible audacity and the boldness of his schemes. Having found out where the woman who had been arrested was

in custody, he went straight to the place and walked in with such swagger and authority, that the sentry saluted him and stood at attention.

"Have you been standing here long?"

"Since the morning, your honour."

"Is it long before you are relieved?"

"Three hours, your honour."

"I shall want you. I'll tell the officer to send another to take your place."

"Certainly, your honour."

And going home without a minute's delay he dressed up as a gendarme himself, repaired to the house where Tchitchikov was under guard, seized the first woman he came across and handed her over to two bold young officials who were also adepts and went off himself in his whiskers, with a gun in his hand, to the sentinel:

"You can go, the commanding officer sent me to take your place." He changed guns with the sentry. That was all that was wanted. Meanwhile the place of the first woman arrested was filled by another who knew nothing about the case, and did not understand what was said to her. The first was hidden away so effectually that it was never discovered what had become of her.

While Samosvitov was hard at work disguised as a warrior, Tchitchikov's lawyer was working miracles on the civilian side. He let the governor know in a roundabout way that the prosecutor was writing a secret report about him; he let the gendarmes' clerk hear that an official staying secretly in the town was writing a report against him, while he assured this secret official that there was a still more secret official who was giving information about him, and he brought

them all into such a position that they were obliged to come to him for advice.

A regular chaos followed: there was one report on the top of another, and things were on the way of being discovered, such as the sun has never looked upon, and, indeed, such as did not exist at all. Everything was turned to account and brought into the case: the fact that so-and-so was an illegitimate son, and that so-and-so was of such an origin and calling, that so-and-so had a mistress, and whose wife was flirting with whom. Scandals, moral lapses and all sorts of things were so mixed up and intertwined with the story of Tchitchikov and of the dead souls, that it was utterly impossible to make out what was most nonsensical: it all seemed equally absurd. When the papers relating to the case began at last to reach the governor-general, the poor prince could make nothing of them. A very clever and efficient clerk who was commissioned to make a synopsis of them almost went out of his mind; it was utterly impossible to get a connected view of the case. The prince was worried at the time by a number of other matters, one more unpleasant than the other. There was famine in one part of the province. The officials sent to distribute bread had not carried out the relief work properly. In another part of the province heretics began to be active. Some one had spread a rumour among them that an Antichrist had appeared who would not leave even the dead in peace and was buying up dead souls. They did penance and sinned, and on the pretext of catching the Antichrist they made short work of persons who were not the Antichrist. In another district the peasants were revolting against the landowners

and the police captains. Some vagrants had spread rumours among them that the time was at hand when the peasants were to become landowners and wear dress-coats, while the landowners were to wear sheepskins and become peasants, and the whole district, without reflecting that there would be far too many landowners and police captains, refused to pay their taxes. Forcible measures had to be resorted to. The poor prince was greatly distracted. Just then word was brought him that Murazov had come.

"Show him in," said the prince.

The old man walked in. . . ."

"So this is your Tchitchikov! You stood up for him and defended him. Now he is mixed up in a crime at which the lowest thief would hesitate."

"Allow me to say, your Excellency, that I don't quite understand the case."

"To forge a will and in such a way. . . . A public flogging is a fit punishment for such a crime."

"Your Excellency—I do not say it to defend Tchitchikov—but you know it is an unproved charge: the case has not yet been investigated."

"There is evidence: the woman who was dressed up to personate the deceased has been arrested, I will question her in your presence to show you."

The prince rang the bell and ordered the woman to be brought—"The one who was arrested," he said to the attendant.

Murazov was silent.

"It's a most disgraceful affair! And shameful to say, the leading officials of the town and the governor himself are mixed up in it. He ought not to be among

the thieves and vagabonds," said the prince with warmth.

"Well, the governor is a kinsman, he has a right to make a claim; and as for the others who are grabbing at it on all sides, that, your Excellency, is the way of mankind. A wealthy woman has died without making a just and sensible disposition of her property, men have rushed in on all sides eager to get something; that is the way of mankind. . . ."

"But why do such dirty things? . . . The scoundrels!" said the prince, with indignation. "I haven't a single good official, they are all blackguards."

"Your Excellency! but which of us is as good as we should be? All the officials of our town are men, they have their qualities, and many are very capable at their work, but every one is liable to err."

"Listen, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, tell me—you are the only man I know to be an honest man—how is it you have this passion for defending every sort of scoundrel?"

"Your Excellency," said Murazov, "whoever the man may be whom you call a scoundrel, still he is a man. How can one help defending a man when half the evil deeds that he commits are due to coarseness and ignorance. We do unjust things at every step and not with evil intention. Why, your Excellency, you too have been guilty of great injustice."

"What!" cried the prince in amazement, completely taken aback by this unexpected turn in the conversation.

Murazov paused as though considering something, and said at last: "Well, in the case of Derpennikov for instance."

"Why, do you mean to say that I was unjust? a crime against the fundamental laws of the realm, equivalent to a betrayal of his country! . . ."

"I am not justifying him. But is it just to condemn a youth who has been seduced and led astray by others through inexperience, as though he were one of the instigators? Why, the same punishment has been given to Derpennikov as to Voronov-Dryanov; and yet their crimes are not the same."

"For God's sake," said the prince with visible emotion. "Do you know something about it? Tell me. I have only lately sent to Petersburg to mitigate his punishment."

"No, your Excellency, I am not speaking because I know something you don't know. Though indeed there is one circumstance which would be in his favour, but he will not himself agree to make use of it, because it will bring trouble on another man. All I think is that your Excellency may have been in too great a hurry then. Pardon me, but to my weak understanding it seems as though a man's previous life should also be taken into consideration, for if one does not look into everything coolly, but makes an outcry from the first, one only terrifies him and gets no real confession; while, if one questions him with sympathy as man to man, he will tell everything of himself and not even ask for mitigation of his sentence, and will feel no bitterness against any one, because he sees clearly that it is not I that am punishing him but the law."

The prince pondered. At that moment an official came in and stood waiting respectfully with his portfolio. There was a look of hard work and anxiety

on his still young and fresh face. It could be seen that it was not for nothing that he served on special commissions. He was one of those few officials who do their work *con amore*. Not excited by ambition nor desire of gain, nor imitation of others, he worked simply because he was convinced that he ought to be here and in no other place, and that this was the object of his life. To investigate, to analyse, and after extricating all the threads of a tangled case, to make it clear was his task. And his toil and his efforts and his sleepless nights were abundantly rewarded if the case at last began to grow clear before his eyes, and its hidden causes to be laid bare, and he felt he could present it all clearly and distinctly in full words. One may say no schoolboy rejoices more when some difficult sentence is unravelled and the real meaning of a great writer's thought becomes apparent to him, than he rejoiced when an intricate case was disentangled. On the other hand . . .

(*A page of the manuscript was torn out at this point and a gap appears in the narrative.*)

. . . "with bread in the parts where there is famine, I know that region better than the officials do: I will find out personally what each one needs. And if you will permit me, your Excellency, I will talk with the heretics too. They will talk more readily with a plain man like me, so God knows, maybe I shall help to settle things with them peacefully. And I will take no money from you because, upon my word, I am ashamed to think of my own gain at such a time when men are dying of hunger. I have a store of bread in readiness,

and I have sent to Siberia, and they will bring me more again the coming summer."

"God only can reward you, Afanasy Vassilyevitch, I will not say one word to you, for—you may feel it yourself—no word is strong enough for it. But let me say one thing in regard to your request. Tell me yourself: have I the right to leave this case uninvestigated, and will it be honest on my part to forgive the scoundrels?"

"Your Excellency, indeed you must not call them that, for many among them are worthy men. A man's circumstances are often very difficult, your Excellency, very, very difficult. It sometimes happens that a man seems to blame all round and when you go into it, he is not the culprit at all."

"But what will they say to themselves if I drop it? You know there are some among them who will give themselves more airs than ever after that, and will even say that they have frightened me. They will be the last to respect . . ."

"Your Excellency, allow me to give you my opinion: gather them all together, let them understand that you know all about it, and put before them your own position in exactly the same way as you have graciously done just now before me, and ask them to tell you what each of them would do in your place."

"But do you imagine that they will be capable of an impulse towards anything more honourable than legal quibbling and filling their pockets? I assure you they will laugh at me."

"I don't think so, your Excellency. Every Russian, even one worse than the average, has right feelings. Perhaps a Jew might do so, but not a Russian. No,

your Excellency, there is no need for you to be reserved. Tell them exactly as you graciously told me. You know they speak ill of you as a proud, ambitious man who believes in himself and will listen to nothing, —so let them see how it really is. Why need you be afraid of them? You are in the right. Tell them as though you were making your confession, not to them but to God Himself."

"Afanasy Vassilyevitch," said the prince hesitatingly, "I will think about that, and meanwhile I thank you very much for your advice."

"And bid them release Tchitchikov, your Excellency."

"Tell that Tchitchikov to get out of the place as quickly as possible, and the further he goes the better. Him I could never forgive."

Murazov bowed and went straight from the prince to Tchitchikov. He found Tchitchikov with cheerfulness already restored, very placidly engaged upon a fairly decent dinner, which had been brought him on china dishes from a very respectable kitchen. From the first sentences of their conversation the old man at once perceived that Tchitchikov had already succeeded in making a secret plan with some one of the tricky officials. He even divined that the unseen hand of the sharp lawyer had some share in this.

"Listen, Pavel Ivanovitch," he said: "I have brought you freedom on condition that you leave the town at once. Collect all your belongings and go in God's name, without putting it off for a minute, for something worse is coming. I know there is a man who is behind you; so I must tell you in secret that there is something else being discovered, and that no power

will save that man now. He of course is glad to drag others down for company and to share the blame. I left you in a very good frame of mind, better than your present one. I am advising you in earnest. Aie, aie, what really matters is not the possessions over which men dispute and for which they murder each other, exactly as though it were possible to gain prosperity in this life without thinking of another life. Believe me, Pavel Ivanovitch, that until men reject everything for which men rend and devour each other on earth, and think of the welfare of their spiritual possessions, it will not be well even with their earthly possessions. Days of hunger and poverty are coming for all the people, and each one severally . . . that is clear. Whatever you say, you know, the body depends on the soul, how then can you expect things to thrive as they ought? Think not of dead souls but of your own living soul, and in God's name take a different path! I too am leaving the town on the morrow. Make haste or when I am gone there will be trouble."

Saying this the old man went out. Tchitchikov sank into thought. Again the significance of life seemed to him something worthy of consideration. "Murazov is right," he said to himself, "it is time to take another path!" Saying this he went out of his prison. The sentry carried his case after him. Selifan and Petrushka were indescribably delighted at their master's release.

"Well, my good lads," said Tchitchikov, addressing them graciously, "we must pack up and set off."

"We'll drive in fine style, Pavel Ivanovitch," said Selifan. "The road's firm I'll be bound, snow enough has fallen. It certainly is high time to get out of the town. I am so sick of it I can't bear the sight of it."

"Go to the carriage-maker's and get the carriage put on runners instead of wheels," said Tchitchikov. He himself went off to the town, not that he was anxious to pay farewell visits to any one. It would have been rather awkward after all that had happened, especially as there were the most discreditable stories going about the town concerning him. He even avoided meeting any one and only went as stealthily as possible to the merchant's from whom he had bought the cloth of the "flame and smoke of Navarino," he took four yards for a coat and breeches, and went off with it himself to the same tailor. For double the price the latter undertook to work at the highest pressure, and set the tailoring population plying their needles, their irons and their teeth all night by candle-light, and the coat was ready next day, though a little late. The horses were all harnessed and waiting. Tchitchikov tried on the coat, however. It was splendid, exactly like the first. But alas! he noticed a smooth white patch upon his head, and murmured sorrowfully: "What reason was there to abandon myself to such despair? I oughtn't to have torn out my hair anyway." After settling with the tailor he drove out of the town at last in a strange frame of mind. This was not the old Tchitchikov; this was a sort of wreck of the old Tchitchikov. The inner state of his soul might be compared with a building that has been pulled down to be rebuilt into a new one, and the new one has not yet been begun, because no definite plan has come from the architect, and the workmen are left in suspense.

An hour earlier old Murazov had set off together with Potapitch in a covered cart, and an hour after Tchitchikov's departure an order went forth that the

prince wished to see all the officials, every one of them, on the eve of his departure for Petersburg.

In the big hall of the governor-general's house, all the officials of the town were gathered together, from the governor to the humblest titular councillor, chiefs of offices and of departments, councillors, assessors, Kisloyedov, Samosvitov, those who had not taken bribes, and those who had taken bribes, those who had disregarded their conscience, those who had half disregarded it, and those who had not disregarded it at all—all awaited the prince's appearance with a curiosity that was not quite free from uneasiness. The prince came out to them neither gloomy nor severe; there was a calm determination in his step and his glance. All the assembled officials bowed, many making a deep bow from the waist. Acknowledging their greeting with a slight bow, the prince began:

"On the eve of my departure for Petersburg I have thought it proper to have an interview with all of you and even to some extent to explain to you the cause of my departure. A very scandalous affair has been set going among us. I imagine that many of those present know of what affair I am speaking. That affair led to the discovery of others no less dishonourable, in which persons, whom I had hitherto regarded as honest, were actually mixed up. I am aware, indeed, that it was the secret aim in this way to make the affair so intricate that it might turn out to be absolutely impossible to deal with it in the regular way. I know, indeed, who was the chief agent in this, though he very skilfully concealed his share in it. But I beg to inform you that I intend to deal with this matter not by the regular method of investigation through docu-

mentary evidence, but by direct court martial as in time of war, and I trust that the Tsar will give me the right to do so, when I lay this case before him. In such circumstances as these, when there is no possibility of conducting a case in accordance with civil law, when boxes of papers have been burned and when efforts are made by a vast mass of false evidence and lying reports to obscure a case which was somewhat obscure originally—I imagine that a court martial is the only resource left, and I should like to know your opinion."

The prince stopped, as though expecting an answer. All stood with their eyes on the floor, many were pale.

"I know, too, of another crime, though those who committed it are fully convinced that it can be known to no one. This case will not be conducted in writing, for I myself shall be the defendant and petitioner, and shall bring forward convincing evidence."

Some one shuddered among the officials, several of the more timorous were overcome with confusion.

"It goes without saying that those principally responsible must be punished by deprivation of rank and property, and the rest by dismissal from their posts. It goes without saying, that a number of the innocent will suffer, too. It cannot be helped, the case is too disgraceful and cries aloud for legal justice. Though I know that it will not even be a lesson to others, because others will come to take the place of those dismissed, and the very ones who have hitherto been honest will become dishonest, and the very ones who will be deemed worthy of trust will sell and betray that trust—in spite of all that, I must act cruelly, for justice cries aloud, and so you must all look upon me as the callous instrument of justice."

A shudder involuntarily passed over all their faces. The prince was calm, his face expressed neither wrath nor indignation.

"Now the very man in whose hands the fate of many lies and whom no supplications could have softened, that very man flings himself now at your feet and entreats you all. All will be forgotten, effaced and forgiven, I will myself be the advocate for all if you grant my request. Here it is. I know that by no means, by no terrors, by no punishments can dishonesty be eradicated. It is too deeply rooted. The dishonest practice of taking bribes has become necessary and inevitable, even for such who are not born to be dishonest. I know that it is almost impossible for many to run counter to the general tendency. But I must now, as at the decisive and sacred moment when it is our task to save our country, when every citizen bears every burden and makes every sacrifice—I must appeal to those at least who still have a Russian heart and who have still some understanding of the word 'honour.' What is the use of discussing which is the more guilty among us! I am perhaps the most guilty of all; I perhaps received you too sternly at first; perhaps by excessive suspicion I repelled those among you who sincerely wished to be of use to me. If they really cared for justice and the good of their country, they ought not to have been offended by the haughtiness of my manner, they ought to overcome their own vanity and sacrifice their personal dignity. It is not possible that I should not have noticed their self-denial and lofty love of justice and should not at last have accepted useful and sensible advice from them. It is anyway more suitable for a subordinate to adapt himself

to the character of his chief than for a chief to adapt himself to the character of a subordinate. It is more lawful anyway and easier, because the subordinates have only one chief, while the chief has hundreds of subordinates. But let us lay aside the question of who is most to blame. The point is that it is our task to save our country, that our country is in danger now, not from the invasion of twenty foreign races, but from ourselves; that, besides our lawful government, another rule has been set up, far stronger than any lawful one. Its conditions are established, everything has its price, and the prices are a matter of common knowledge. And no ruler, though he were wiser than all the legislators and governors, can cure the evil however he may curtail the activity of bad officials, by putting them under the supervision of other officials. All will be fruitless until every one of us feels that just as at the epoch of the rising up of all the peoples he was armed against the enemy, he must now take his stand against dishonesty. As a Russian, as one bound to you by ties of birth and blood, I must now appeal to you. I appeal to those among you who have some conception of what is meant by an honourable way of thinking. I invite you to remember the duty which stands before a man in every position. I invite you to look more closely into your duty and the obligation of your earthly service for we all have as yet but a dim understanding of it, and we scarcely. . . ."

THE END